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editor's letter



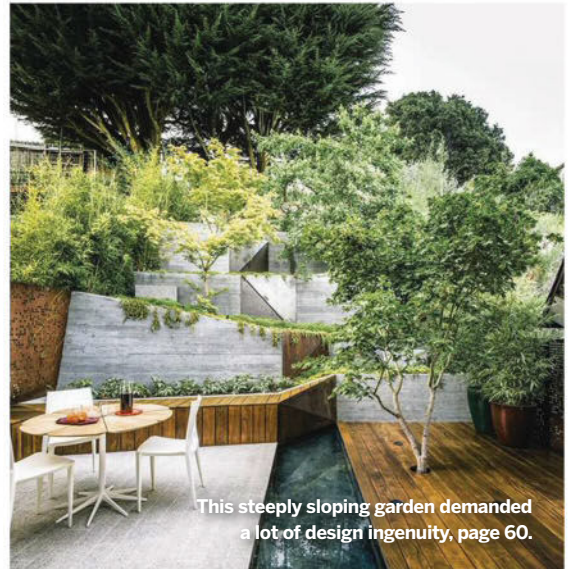
Our aim at *Gardens Illustrated* is to inspire and inform readers about the endlessly fascinating ways in which people garden all over the world. In the second of our four-part series on Allt-y-bela, designer Arne Maynard's garden in Monmouthshire, we look at how his clever plant choices and colour combinations create spring interest. On a much smaller scale and with an entirely different aesthetic, is the steeply

sloping garden in Berkeley, California, that has been given a dramatic and highly original treatment by designer Mary Barendfeld. Not only does the garden look fabulous in all seasons from the house, but the owners can now walk to the very top, which affords spectacular views over San Francisco Bay. Many of the gardens we feature in the magazine are created by the world's leading designers and while the results are breathtaking, I'm aware that to be built they often require substantial finances. This issue we look at the five-acre garden created by Charlotte and Donald Molesworth. Renowned for its topiary, the garden is utterly charming (Charlotte is an accomplished designer and artist and Donald a gardener), so I was fascinated to discover that it was made with limited resources over the course of the past 30-odd years. Turn to page 64 for Charlotte's top tips for creating style on a budget. We also begin our latest series on container planting, offering plenty of ideas and practical advice for seasonal displays. I hope you enjoy the issue.



Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 14

Julie



This steeply sloping garden demanded a lot of design ingenuity, page 60.



Blow away the winter blues with this colourful container planting idea, page 44.

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MARCH 2016



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Charlotte Molesworth's garden. Photograph by Rachel Warne

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RACHEL WARNE, JASON INGRAM

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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED
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CHARLOTTE MOLESWORTH

Charlotte has gardened from childhood, but taught art before turning to garden design consultancy. On page 64 she styled our feature on the topiary garden she and her husband Donald have created on a limited budget.

"To understand the mechanics and ethos of our garden, you need to look behind the scenes as Rachel's photographs show."



CELIA HART

Celia is an illustrator and printmaker who finds inspiration for her lino and woodcuts in the countryside surrounding her studio in southwest Suffolk. For her illustration for Frank Ronan's column this month, on page 114, she found her travels in the USA came in useful too.

"I sat down with Google maps to track Frank's road trip route, reliving holiday memories and discovering new 'must see' places."



JACKY MILLS

Zoology graduate Jacky used to work in zoos, but is now a freelance gardener. She enjoys blurring the boundaries between garden and landscape and tries to incorporate natural materials wherever possible. On page 44 she offers some stylish ideas for spring container planting.

"It is so therapeutic to indulge in a hit of colour and scent at this time of year when our senses are at their most deprived."



MARINA CHRISTOPHER

Marina studied botany and ecology before starting her nursery Phoenix Perennial Plants, which embraces ecological principles. She is currently writing our plantsman's favourites column and you can find her March plants on page 26.

"Choosing just ten plants each month has been a real challenge – there are always so many gems worthy of selection."

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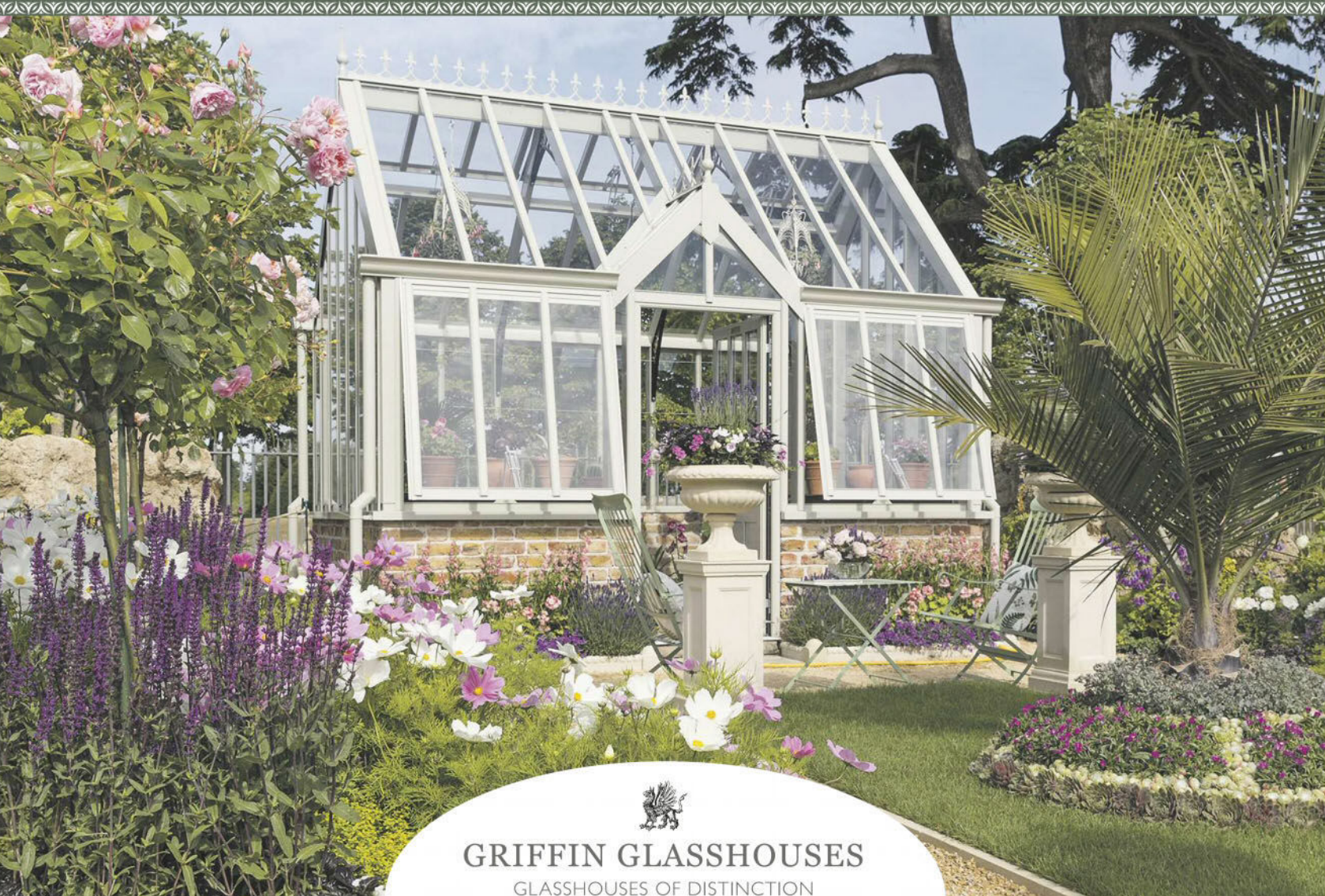
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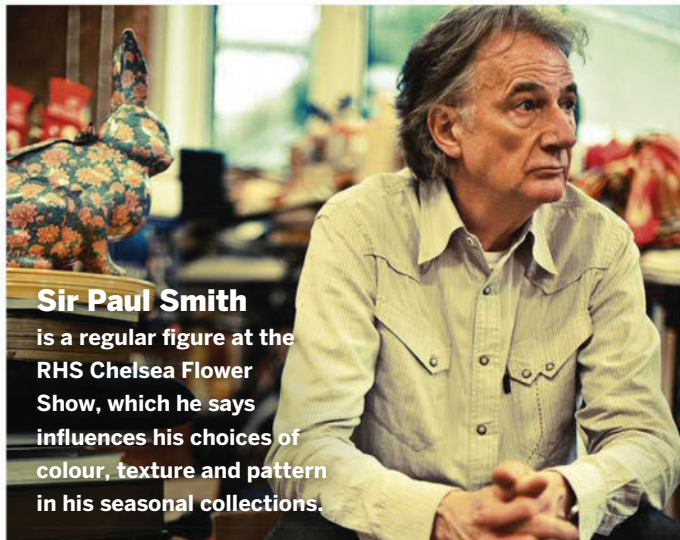
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Exclusive Reader Events 2016

Gardens Illustrated Talk
24 May 2016 – page 9

East Anglia Gardens
5-9 September 2016 – page 10



Sir Paul Smith is a regular figure at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, which he says influences his choices of colour, texture and pattern in his seasonal collections.



Luciano Giubbilei Italian-born Luciano came to England in 1994 to study garden design. His international practice designs gardens characterised by the beauty of their spatial arrangement.

Tuesday 24 May 2016

Gardens Illustrated Talk

Join us at the Royal Geographical Society in London for an inspirational discussion between fashion designer Sir Paul Smith and garden designer Luciano Giubbilei

When Luciano Giubbilei first met world-renowned fashion designer Sir Paul Smith at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011, it was a meeting that was to set Luciano on a new path in his design career. For our talk Luciano and Sir Paul will look back at the effects of that meeting and explore what for them are key relationships between fashion, plants, flowers and design.

Book now for Standard and Premium tickets. All tickets are allocated seating with Premium ticket holders seated in the front section of the lecture theatre. Premium guests also receive a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne on arrival as well as a *Gardens Illustrated* goody bag.

Talk details

- **Date** Tuesday 24 May 2016.
- **Venue** Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

PROGRAMME

- **6pm** Doors open – cash bar available. Premium ticket holders will be served a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne.
- **7-8.15pm** Talk including Q&A.
- **9pm** Doors close.

Gardens Illustrated reserves the right to replace any of the speakers with other speakers of equal stature in the unlikely event that either of them is unable to attend. Tickets must be booked in advance. Please let us know when booking of any special access requirements. Tickets are non refundable. Driving to the lecture is not advised. Nearest London Underground station is South Kensington.

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Corpusty Mill Garden.



Swan Hotel, Lavenham.



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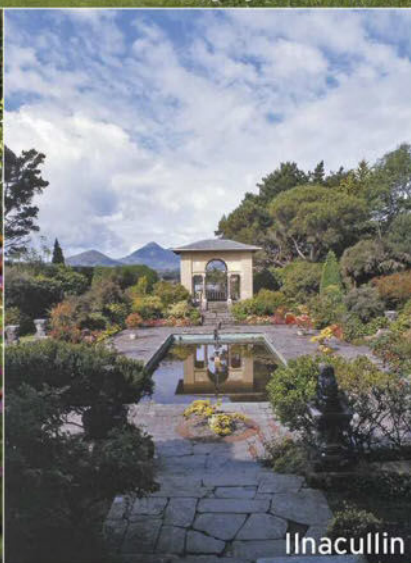
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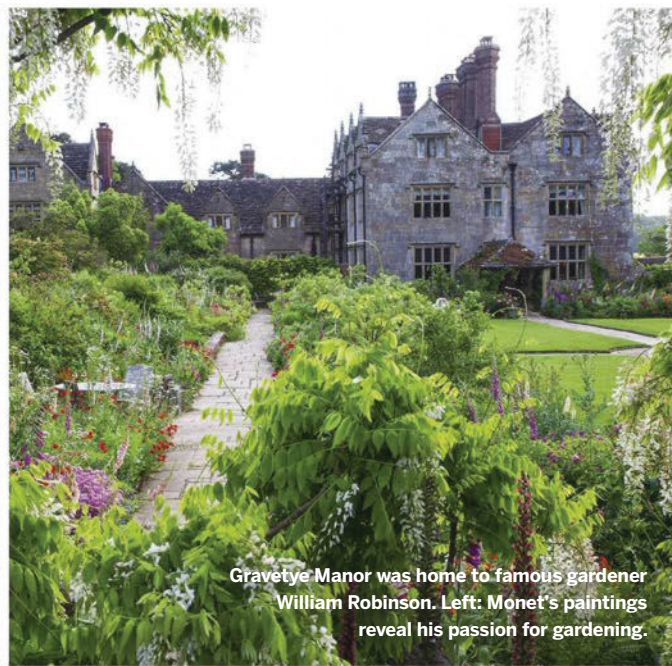
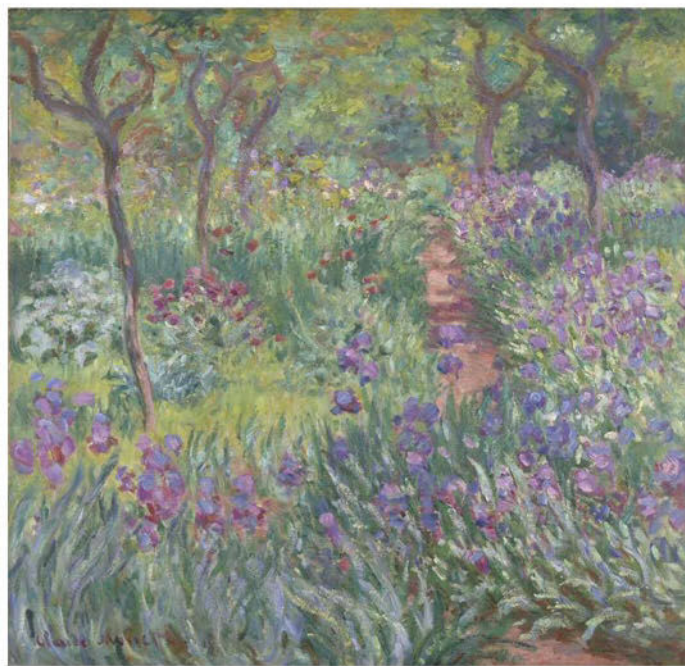
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To find out more about the exhibition and the hotel and garden at Gravetye Manor go to relevant websites:

- royalacademy.org.uk
- gravetyemanor.co.uk

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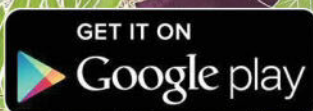
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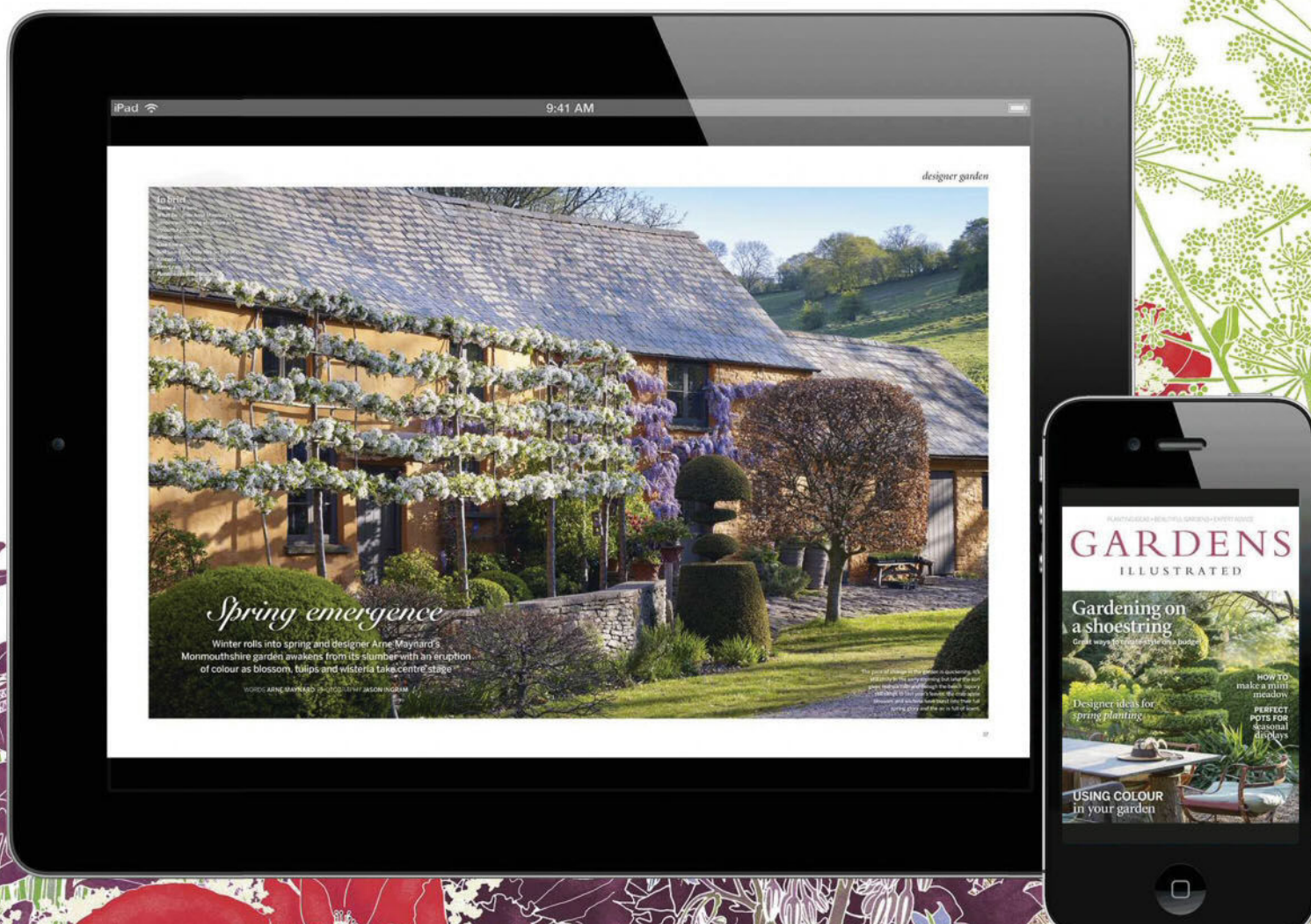
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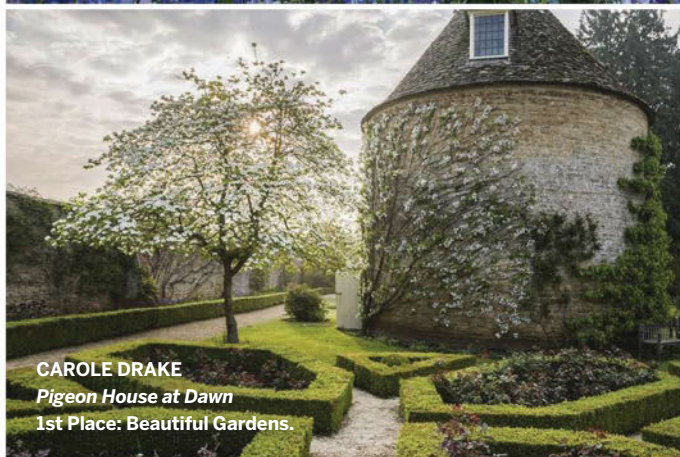
Dig in

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY ALYS HURN



RICHARD BLOOM
Tekapo Lupins
Winner: International
Photographer of the Year.



CAROLE DRAKE
Pigeon House at Dawn
1st Place: Beautiful Gardens.



WILL JENKINS
The Housing Estate
1st Place: Young Garden
Photographer of the Year.

IGPOTY WINNERS

Blooming marvellous

A stunning shot of lupins growing on the banks of a stream, taken by Suffolk-based photographer Richard Bloom, is the overall winner in this year's International Garden Photographer of the Year competition. His photograph, *Tekapo Lupins* (above), was taken in New Zealand's South Island in early summer. "The landscape was already amazing," said Richard, "scattered with drifts of naturalised



lupins, which gave it a psychedelic, wonderland feel." You can see this and other category winners at the IGPOTY exhibition at the Nash Conservatory, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, until 13 March, and then at selected venues nationwide. For full details visit igpoty.com and kew.org

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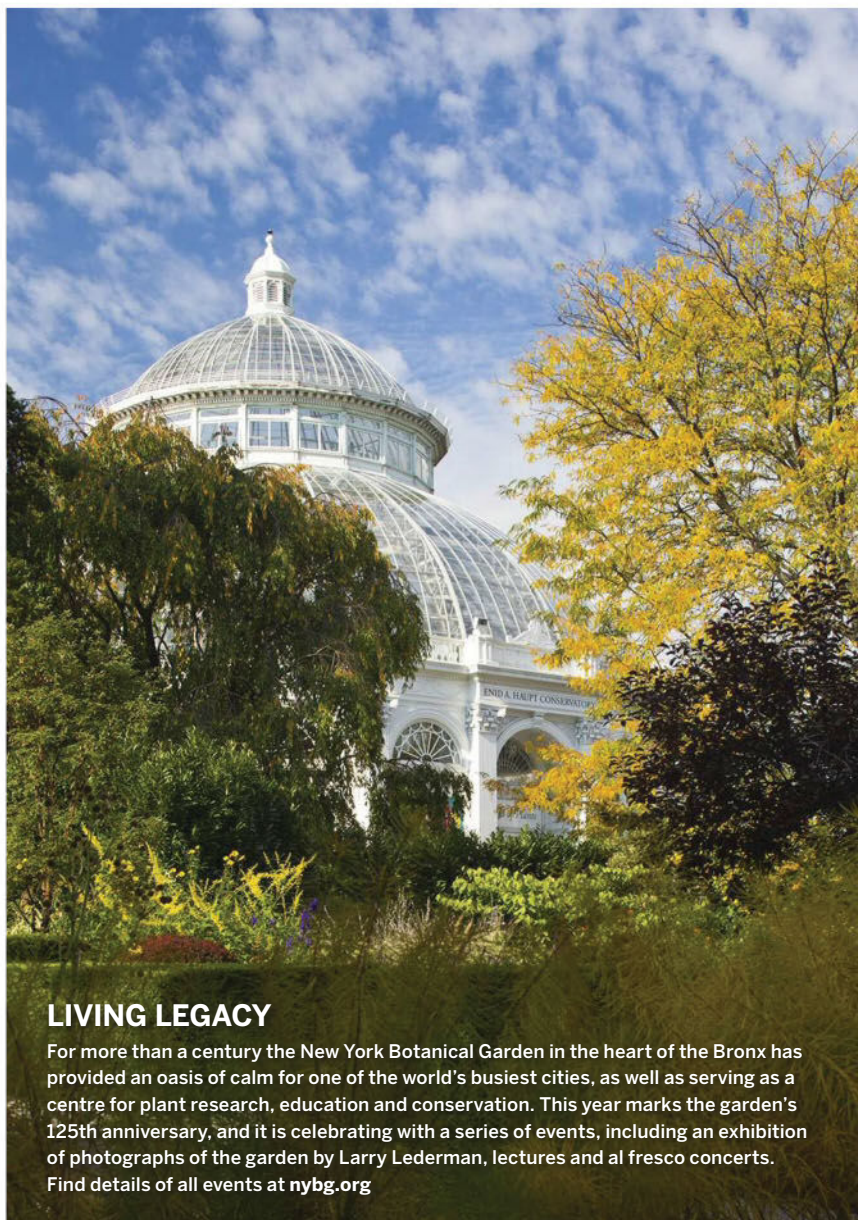
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For more than a century the New York Botanical Garden in the heart of the Bronx has provided an oasis of calm for one of the world's busiest cities, as well as serving as a centre for plant research, education and conservation. This year marks the garden's 125th anniversary, and it is celebrating with a series of events, including an exhibition of photographs of the garden by Larry Lederman, lectures and al fresco concerts. Find details of all events at nybg.org



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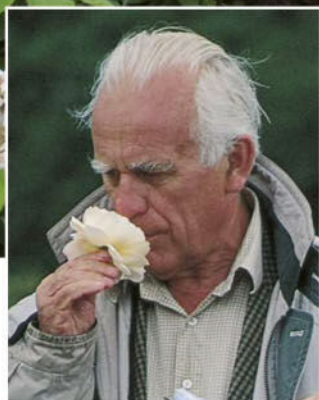
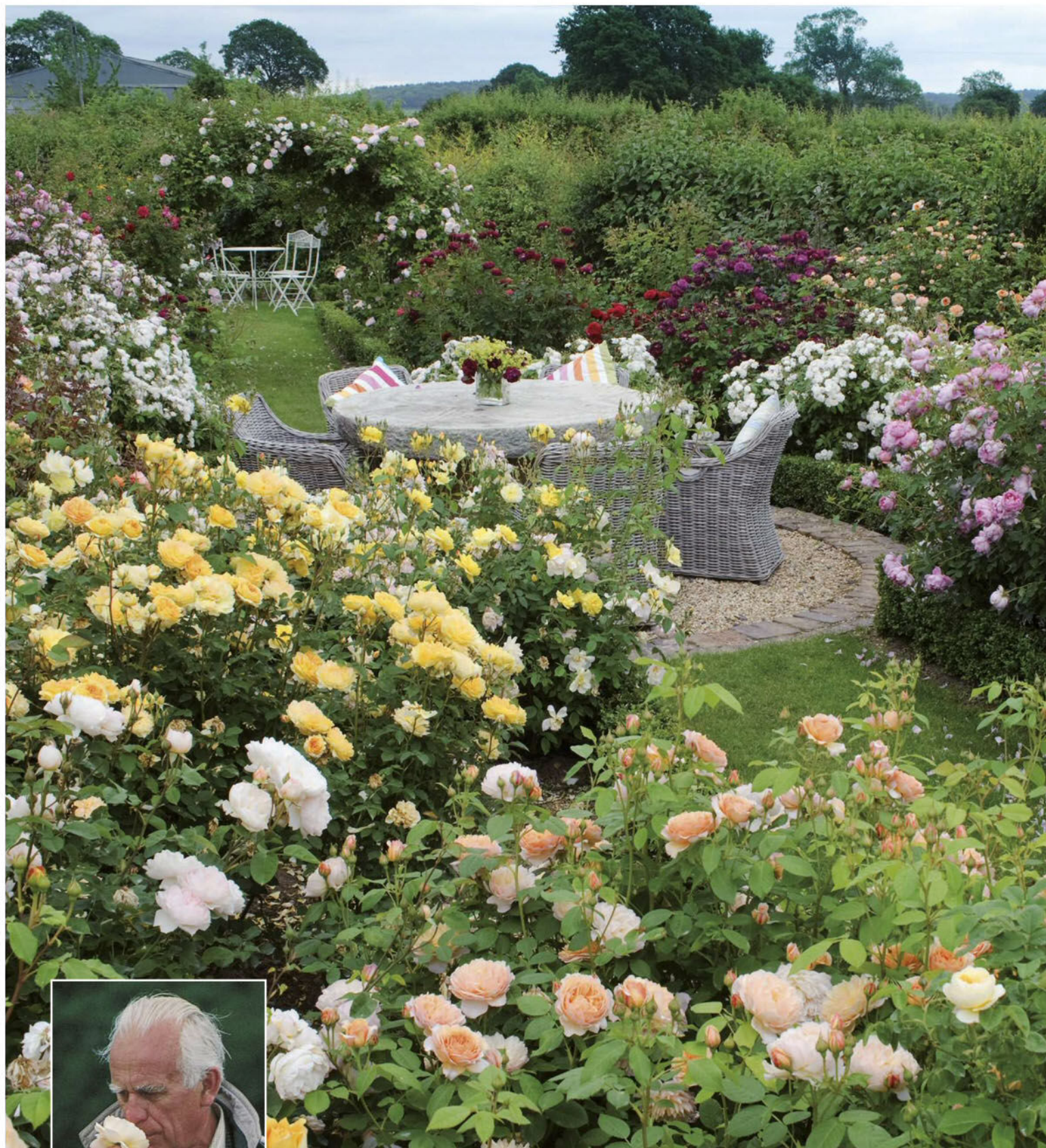
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Diary



Keukenhof Gardens.

• Spring Walk

Take a rejuvenating stroll around the Grade II*-listed gardens at Kelmars Hall.

6 March, 11am-3pm. £3.50.

Kelmars Hall, Kelmars, Northampton NN6 9LY.

Tel 01604 686543, kelmars.com

• Plant and Gardening Fair

More than 30 stalls of plants and gardening sundries, plus posy-making workshops to help you create the perfect Mother's Day gift. 6 March, 10am-4pm. £3. Forde Abbey, Chard, Somerset TA20 4LU. Tel 01460 220231, fordeabbey.co.uk

• The English Garden,

Designs and Influences

Garden designer Heidi Howcroft will discuss how to find the right style to suit you and your garden. Ticket price includes a two-course lunch. 8 March, 12pm. £55.

Gravetye Manor, Vowels Lane, West Hoathly, Sussex RH19 4LJ. Tel 01342 810567, gravetyemanor.co.uk

• Botanical Illustration

Course

Learn tips and techniques for creating botanical art on this three-day course set in the Eden Project's Mediterranean Biome. 11-13 March. £180. Eden Project, Bodelva, Cornwall PL24 2SG. Tel 01726 811911, edenproject.com

• Easter Wreath Making

Discover how to create your own wreath for Easter using seasonal plants. Ticket price includes all materials.

19 March, 11am-1.30pm.

£85. Petersham Nurseries, Church Lane, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7AB.

Tel 020 8940 5230,

petershamnurseries.com

• Tulip Mosaic at Keukenhof

Don't miss Keukenhof's spectacular flower mosaic using 100,000 tulips, muscaris and crocuses. The Delft Blue-style pattern will celebrate the Dutch Golden Age – a period in the 17th century when Dutch trade, science and art flourished.

24 March – 16 May, 8am-7.30pm. €16. Keukenhof, Bezoekadres, Stationsweg 166A, 2161 AM Lisse, the Netherlands. Tel +33 (0)252 465 555, keukenhof.nl

• Dinner with Matthew Wilson 'My Chelsea Garden'

Book now for the chance to hear garden designer Matthew Wilson discuss his design at last year's Chelsea Flower Show for the Royal Bank of Canada Garden. Includes a four-course, black-tie dinner. 21 April, 7.30pm. £100. Hambleton Hall, Hambleton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8TH. Tel 01572 756991, hambletonhall.com



New *Digitalis obscura* 'Dusky Maid' from Hayloft Plants.

NEW PLANT

Fire trap

The bell-shaped blooms of *Digitalis obscura* 'Dusky Maid' look deceptively similar to those of a *Penstemon*, but this fiery plant is in fact a rather unusual Spanish foxglove. Growing to a height of 45cm, leafy stems sprout upwards from evergreen foliage and produce pretty orange flowers in both spring and summer. Plants will be available from April onwards, but you can place orders now for this new addition to the Hayloft catalogue. Priced at five plants for £15 or ten plants for £18 from hayloftplants.co.uk

BREAKFAST BUNNY

Start your day with a hop, skip and jump with this charming wild rabbit eggcup from Quail Ceramics. The hand-painted figurine will cheer up any breakfast table and makes an eggcellent Easter gift. Priced at £11. Tel 01304 379911, quailceramics.co.uk



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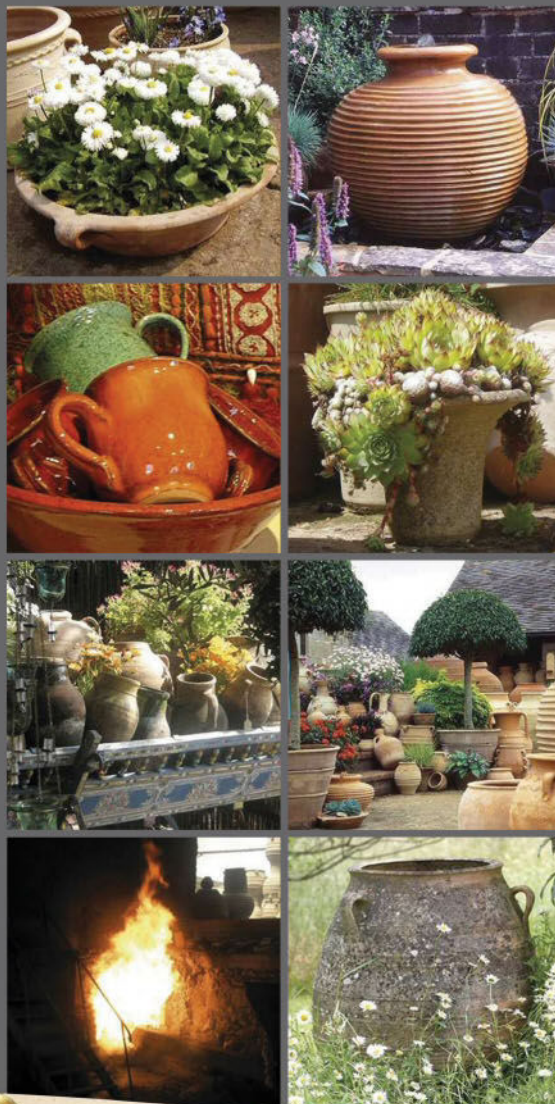


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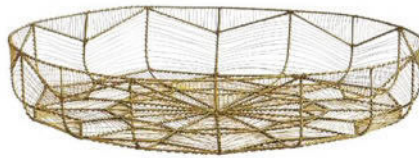
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for spring pot displays

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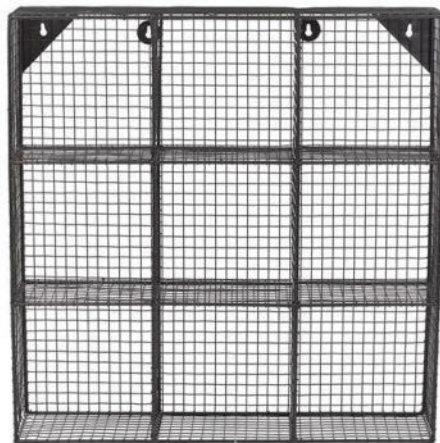
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**Early 20th-century exhibition toleware
vases,** £70 each, 07581 061251,
robhallantiques.co.uk



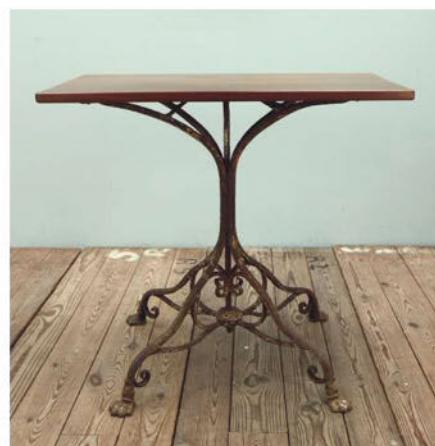
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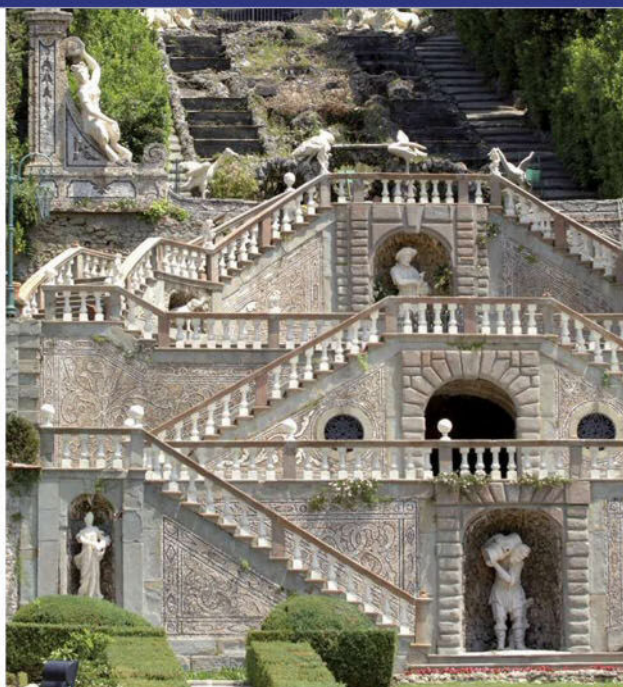
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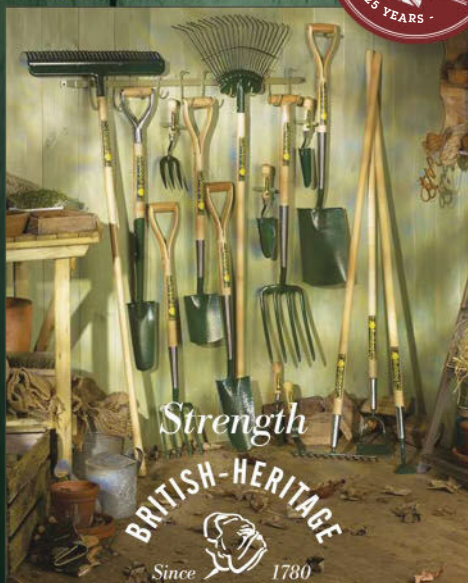
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Anemone pavonina

This tuberous plant produces an attractive rosette of dissected green foliage in early spring. Flowering stems unfurl from the centre to reveal large vibrant blooms in shades of white, pink, red or purple with an occasional pale lemon. A central white – or occasionally, as here, pink – halo around a cluster of stamens completes the picture of this flamboyant flower, which has the appropriate colloquial name of peacock windflower. Stamens vary in colour through black, green and blue. If happy, will naturalise to form large colonies.

Height 20cm.

Origin Greece, Turkey.

Growing conditions Well-drained soil in sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 8b-10b.

Season of interest Early spring.



March plants

With spring in the air, plantswoman and ecologist Marina Christopher shares her favourite plants to welcome back warmer and longer days

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Marina Christopher is a plantswoman who owns Phoenix Perennial Plants in Hampshire*.



Corydalis solida 'Beth Evans'

Delicate, even fragile, to look at, this corydalis is tougher than it seems. Erupting from the earth in early spring it unravels to display spikes of pink flowers with a white splash on the spur, interspersed with small, green leaves that hover above attractive, deeply divided foliage. Each flower is tubular, with a long horn at the back full of nectar for long-tongued bees. It was named for the late wife of Alf Evans who cared for the peat gardens at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, where it was raised.

Height 10cm.

Origin Raised from a seedling at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

Season of interest Early spring.

Primula elatior subsp. *pallasii*

Primroses, cowslips and oxlips are some of the harbingers of spring with clusters of cheery yellow flowers over rosettes of pale puckered green leaves. This oxlip, which hails from central Asia, has large, pale-yellow blooms that hang from one side of the flowering stem. These graceful nodding flowers have a sweet, delicate scent that attracts pollinating insects, and differs from other subspecies in not having hairy foliage. It grows well with me in shady moist soil, seeding around among small, blue bulbs, such as *Muscari azureum* and *Scilla bifolia*.

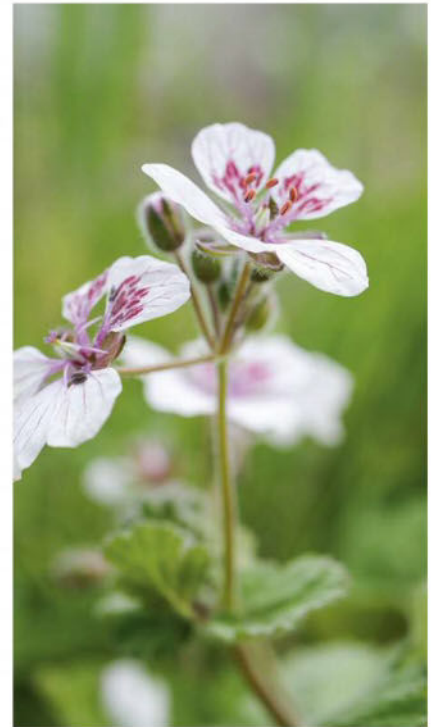
Height 15cm.

Origin Anatolia to the Altai Mountains.

Growing conditions Moist soil; dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H6.

Season of interest Spring.



Erodium trifolium

Sometimes labelled as *E. pelargoniflorum*, which is an altogether less hardy and more delicate specimen, *E. trifolium* has densely hairy, trilobed foliage, which is soft to the touch. Its flowering stems bear clusters of almost-white flowers that have a fine tracery of pink veins and deep-pink blotches on two of the petals giving an overall appearance of pink blooms. It has a carrot-like root and needs good drainage and sun. It grows well in gravel and prefers a lean diet. Slightly tacky foliage to the touch and not long-lived but will seed around.

Height 25cm.

Origin Atlas Mountains.

Growing conditions Sun, good drainage and a lean diet.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Season of interest Spring through summer.



Viola riviniana Purpurea Group

Diminutive in stature, this fibrous-rooted species has a rosette of deep-purple foliage, which is darker when grown in full sun. In late March/early April bluish-purple flowers unfurl from tight buds and will continue to flower for many weeks. The large, basal petal has deep-purple guidelines to attract pollinating insects, but the nectar is stored in the spur of the violet, meaning only long-tongued insects can feed. Foliage provides a good foil for other plants.

Height 10-15cm.

Origin Mediterranean, central and northern Europe.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive, humus-rich soil.

Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Spring to summer.

Narcissus 'Xit'

This is a rather unprepossessing moniker for a singularly beautiful *Narcissus* hybrid in Division 3, the small-cupped daffodils. It has a glacial white corona surrounding a delicate frilly white cup with a subtle green eye and slender, almost grassy foliage. Raised by Alec Gray in the 1940s using *N. rupicola* subsp. *watieri* as a parent, this hybrid is larger in all its features while retaining the beauty of its north African lineage. It is hardy but does not always reliably flower with me in my cold frost pocket, so when it does perform it is all the more special.

Height 20cm.

Origin Hybrid of *N. rupicola* subsp. *watieri*.

Growing conditions Well-drained but moisture-retentive soil.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

Season of interest Early spring.



Geranium palmatum

Large, glossy, deeply dissected foliage suggests a tropical origin for this handsome geranium. My frost pocket on clay is too damp to maintain it outside in all but the mildest of winters, but it survives outside in many gardens and forms huge clumps in my cold glasshouse, seeding prolifically in the gravel at the base of the staging. In early summer, substantial flowering stems produce clusters of purplish-pink flowers with deeper pink veins to guide bees to the nectar. As temperatures decline, foliage takes on fiery red autumnal colours. AGM†.

Height 90cm.

Origin Madeira.

Growing conditions Sheltered position; moisture-retaining soil.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 9b-11.

Season of interest Year round.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

A visit to **Beth Chatto Gardens** in early spring is a great chance to see the structure of a garden in the drier parts of the country before herbaceous plants grow to cover its bones. There is a wide selection of early spring plants for sale including *Anemone pavonina* (see page 26) in its many colour forms. The Beth Chatto Gardens, Clacton Road, Elmstead Market,



Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB.
Tel 01206 822007,
bethchatto.co.uk

You can see *Anemone pavonina* spectacularly naturalised at the **University of Bristol Botanic Garden**, Stoke Park Road, Bristol BS9 1JG. Tel 0117 331 4906, bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden

For another chance to see these flamboyant anemones visit **Ashwood Nurseries**. The nursery is beautifully

Fritillaria raddeana

Fleeting in flower, this lovely greenish-yellow fritillary resembles a crown imperial in miniature with a top-knot of slender green leaves and foliage that spirals around the flowering stem below the clustered flower head. It is found in rocky places with dry summers but can withstand cold winters especially if covered by a layer of snow. I am able to grow it reliably in dappled shade or sun and have been surprised that it appears to be able to cope with moist winters on my heavy clay. The flowers are delicately scented to attract bumblebees.

Height 60cm.

Origin Iran and Turkmenistan.

Growing conditions Sun or dappled shade, not waterlogged.

Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Season of interest Early spring.



Pulmonaria 'Benediction'

I was given this lovely pulmonaria by the brilliant plantsman Dan Hinkley. It was named for Loie Benedict, who gardened near Dan's famous Heronswood nursery in Washington state. It has a compact habit, forming a rounded mound of eye-catching, bright azure flowers with silver marbled foliage. This is a long-flowering and charming addition to the spring woodland garden with other understorey gems, such as erythroniums, trilliums, corydalis and cardamines. Pollinated by the rotund chestnut-bodied bee fly, with its long snout.

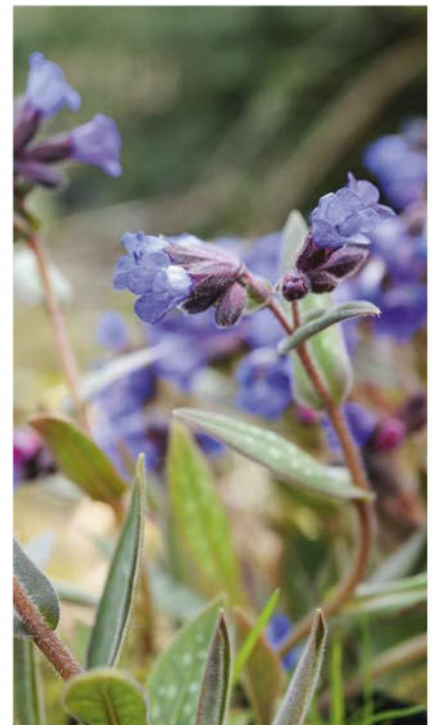
Height 20cm.

Origin Raised from seedling.

Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil; sun or dappled shade.

Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

Season of interest Early to late spring.



Ipheion 'Alberto Castillo'

Strap-like greyish-green leaves emerge first, followed by a succession of single, flat, white, star-like flowers with six petals. A distinct, central purple line marks the back of each petal and stems are also suffused with a purplish stain. The flowers have a sweet scent, reminiscent of vanilla or honey. Hardy in moisture-retentive, well-drained soils in southern England but detests cold, wet clay. Pot cultivation in loam-based compost with added grit works well. AGM.

Height 15cm.

Origin South America.

Growing conditions Full sun, good drainage, moisture-retentive soil or container grown.

Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8b-9b.

Season of interest Early spring to early summer, dormant during summer.

maintained and specialises in breeding outstanding hellebores, hepaticas and salvias so it is hard to come away empty handed. Ashwood Lower Lane, Ashwood, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 OAE. Tel 01384 401996, ashwoodnurseries.com

Seeing great swathes of early spring colour is always uplifting and the **Cambridge University Botanic Garden**

is a wonderful place to see a range of bulbous and tuberous plants naturalised in a garden setting. Among the several National Collections the garden holds is the National Collection of *Fritillaria*. 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336268, botanic.cam.ac.uk

If you are interested in a particular genus of plants you can look it up in the **National**



HOWARD GE/ GAPPHOTOS

Plant Directory, which is published each year by Plant Heritage – the conservation charity also known as the National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (nccpg.com). The directory lists anybody who holds a National Collection, and many are open for visits. In the current edition you'll find collections of many of the plants listed here including two collections of *Corydalis*.

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Jojo takes action on her allotment, planting a nectar-rich strip of meadow and ordering cucumber seeds in an attempt to reverse national trends

WORDS JOJO TULLOH ILLUSTRATIONS SARAH YOUNG

Over the past 100 years, we have lost 97 per cent of our hay meadows. This makes it almost a moral responsibility to give over a little strip of your plot (or lawn) to a micro meadow rich with wild flowers as forage for the pollinators our fruit and vegetables rely on. I can't control what happens in the wider countryside but I can ensure my plot is a model of biodiversity. If that sounds pious, it's an action fuelled by self-interest; virtue with a beautiful (and fruitful) outcome. It doesn't have to be big – mine is 6m x 1m. James Fenton makes a good point in his book, *A Garden From a Hundred Packets of Seed*, that a real meadow is a field with a product, hay. So think ahead and decide what you're going to do with it. In our case the family guinea pigs will be the beneficiaries. Following Fenton's advice for a successful mini meadow without removing top soil, I will be preparing the ground in the next month, as weather allows, by laying a 1-2cm weed suppressant mulch of sand into which I will sow the Chiltern Seeds Special Pollen and Nectar Meadow Mixture (a packet of 32 nectar-rich plant seeds, enough for 1-2m² costs £2.40) mixed with a bag of long-stemmed heritage wheat seeds I picked up at a symposium on wheat and baking. When seedlings appear, I will ring the bed with organic Advanced Slug

Killer slug pellets from the Organic Gardening Catalogue (£6.95 for 575g, organiccatalogue.com).

British cucumbers may be on the verge of extinction. Last year, supermarkets slashed the price and left growers with slim margins. The Cucumber Growers Association reported UK production was at a 100-year low at under 250 acres. So, if you want really fresh cucumbers, you may have to grow them yourself. Order seed now for outdoor varieties to plant in pots from the end of April, including favourites such as 'Burpless Tasty Green' FI Hybrid and the reliable 'Marketmore' (£2.55 and £2.80, chilternseeds.co.uk). Also good is the heritage variety 'Early Fortune', a prolific cropper bred for early 20th-century market gardeners (£2.10, realseeds.co.uk).

If you like growing something a bit different, why not try agretti, also known as barba di frate or monk's beard? This is a Mediterranean vegetable with long, thin, succulent leaves a little like samphire. It is crunchy, has a mild mineral taste and is quick to cook, simply braised or steamed and dressed with olive oil and lemon juice. It's hugely popular with chefs and seed is highly sought after (it completely sold out last year). It grows into a 45cm-high bush and the green tops grow back after cutting (£5.99, seedsofitaly.com). ▶

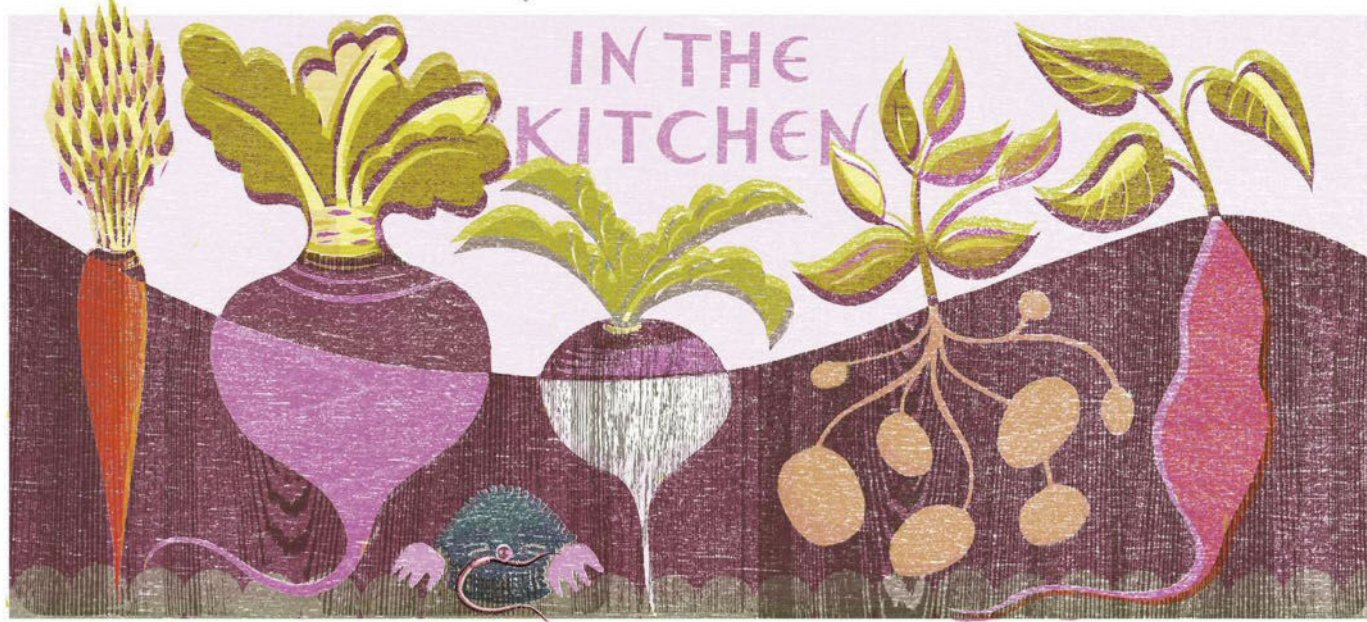
WHAT TO DO NOW

• It's easy to spot the old lettuce cultivars in catalogues. They're the ones with the colourful names. Without a photograph, how else could the gardeners of previous centuries picture the leaves? These first three tried-and-tested lettuces are all cos or romaine-type lettuces. These have

large, upright heads with long, crisp leaves, are slow to bolt and tolerate low temperatures, making them ideal for spring planting. Try a bed of 'Rouge d'Hiver' (red winter), an old cultivar introduced before 1885 with small, compact, pointed heads and red-tinged leaves, and an attractive, delicious leaf

(£1.95, chilternseeds.co.uk). Grow alongside 'Forellenschluss', an old Austrian cultivar (it means 'speckled like a trout'), and the aptly named 'Little Gem', the reliable dwarf cos with its crisp, sweet leaves and compact lemon-yellow heart. But do also plant the larger, very crisp 'Lobjoits Green

Cos' (£1.25, seedaholic.com). Two loose-leaf lettuces that perform well at low temperatures are 'Parella Rossa', also known as 'Rougette de Montpellier' (£2.25, seedsofitaly.com), with dark red leaves, and 'Passion Brune', which has a crisp head with tender, red-edged leaves (£2.25, seedsofitaly.com).



'Foods are fattening because they are nice,' wrote the poet Philip Larkin. He knew the secret to staying thin – eat only revolting food – but quite sensibly could not do it. To my mind, the tastiest and most indispensable of all fattening ingredients is butter. I cannot imagine a world of vegetable (or any kind of) cookery without it, as this essential basic ingredient enhances and underscores the subtle flavours of vegetables without ever overwhelming them. This recipe recorded by Dorothy Hartley in her seminal book on English folk cookery, *Food in England*, is unashamedly buttery and designed for this time of year when green onion shoots are showing and the last of the potatoes must be used up. Hartley calls it *stelk* and describes it as an onion-potato supper dish made with old winter potatoes cooked with late spring onions or, alternatively, Welsh Holtzers. I think she probably means *Allium fistulosum*, also known as Welsh or onion leek, or *ciboule* in France. This edible bulbous perennial has large, creamy-white flowers beloved of bees – perfect for a potager (*Allium fistulosum* is £2.05, chilternseeds.co.uk).

Stelk (serves two)

For this you'll need one bunch of spring onions, 200ml of milk, three medium potatoes. Trim and wash the onions thoroughly, cut into

5cm lengths (including green tops) and simmer in the milk until tender. Peel, boil and mash the potatoes, then pour in enough of the onion milk to make a smooth purée before adding the onion pieces and beating to a green fluff with plenty of butter. Season quite strongly with salt and pepper and serve in a bowl, making a hole in the centre of the potato into which you add a knob of butter. Eat from the edge like porridge, dipping into the well of melted butter as you go. A comforting light supper on its own or serve with sausages for something more substantial.

Dried chillies, such as the mildly spicy ancho (a dried poblano chilli), can be made into a useful purée that keeps well (two weeks in the fridge) and can be added to soups, stews or sautéed winter greens. Toast six dried chillies briefly (five minutes) in a hot oven until they puff up. Remove the stems, sinews and seeds then pop into a bowl and cover with boiling water. Soak for 20 minutes before straining and puréeing with a little of the liquid. Store covered in the fridge or use to make chilli butter. Take 100g of softened butter and beat with a spoon, work in two tablespoons of the chilli purée and add the grated zest and juice of half a lime and a pinch of sea salt and black pepper. Use on toast with avocado, or to flavour rice, polenta and pulses. □

USEFUL COOKERY TECHNIQUE

No.3 Instant broth

Dried mushrooms make an instant broth to add to dishes.

Soak 25g dried porcini mushrooms in a cup of boiling water for 20 minutes. Strain any grit and use mushrooms (finely chopped) and the liquid.

RECIPES

Eat your roots

It's hard to summon up enthusiasm for root vegetables at the end of winter but if treated properly they can still delight. A purée is one good way to deal with them. You can use this basic recipe to make combinations of the following vegetables: celeriac, parsnips, sweet potatoes, turnips,

carrots, potatoes, Jerusalem artichokes and swedes.

Any root veg purée (serves four)

Roast a **head of garlic** in a medium oven (45 mins) and then cut off the tops of the **cloves** and squeeze out the pulp. Take about **800g of root vegetables** peeled and cut into cubes

and boil in a pan of salted water until tender (about 20 mins). Return to the pan over a very low heat to steam out any water. Mash to a smooth purée with the garlic (you can use a food processor but not for potatoes, which will turn to glue). Add **1tbsp of olive oil, 2tbsp of crème fraîche or yoghurt, 2tbsp of lemon juice, salt**

and pepper, a little **grated nutmeg** and **chopped fresh herbs** – try parsley, thyme, coriander or sage.

For individual purées, try sweet potato or swede with chilli butter (see above). Or try beetroot cooked until tender, peeled and puréed with garlic, salt, olive oil, white wine vinegar and yoghurt – great with feta and dill.



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Andrew Turvey

As head gardener at historic Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, Andrew enjoys the focus on preserving our horticultural heritage

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Who has inspired your career the most? The person who has had the biggest influence on my career is Sir Tim Smit. The Channel 4 coverage of his discovery and restoration of Heligan in 1996, when I was only 13, captivated me and set me on my path to restoring gardens.

Horticultural heroes Sir Joseph Paxton. I look on him as one of the most remarkable head gardeners, considering all that he was able to achieve. When I think of Paxton it gives me the inspiration and drive to achieve the very best I can and make the most of every opportunity.

Favourite gardens It has to be the gardens that I have worked in as they have all left a large impression on me: Hillier's Garden in Hampshire, RHS Wisley, The Grove in Hertfordshire, Myddelton House Gardens in Middlesex, and now Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

Most valuable training My two-year diploma at the RHS gardens Wisley as I was able to work in eight different departments giving me an understanding of different disciplines, which I have then been able to build on. However, I also highly value my time at school where I completed my City & Guilds Level 2 in horticulture, which I started age 13 and which was my first formal training.

Dream plant destination The Namib Desert to see the extraordinary *Welwitschia mirabilis*, a gymnosperm that only produces two leaves that continue to grow throughout its life. The plant has remarkable means of survival in this hostile habitat.

Favourite planting style I confess I don't have a favourite planting style, I find inspiration from a range of styles from the landscape garden to prairie planting. However, if I could travel back to one period in history, and be able to continue my work as a head gardener, it would have to be the Victorian period largely because of all the advancements in horticulture that were being made at that time.

What heartens you about our attitudes to horticulture today?

I feel we are currently in a great period of horticulture where we are not only looking to the future but we are also very closely looking at our past to conserve and restore our heritage.

Contact andrew.turvey@english-heritage.org.uk

Wrest Park will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of 'Capability' Brown with a series of events throughout the year. english-heritage.org.uk

In brief

Name Allt-y-bela.

What Designer Arne Maynard's own garden with strong structure and colourful planting.

Where Monmouthshire.

Size Five acres.

Soil Loam and clay mix on top of clay.

Climate Sheltered, sun trap with heavy rain fall.

Hardiness rating USDA 8.

Spring emergence

Winter rolls into spring and designer Arne Maynard's Monmouthshire garden awakens from its slumber with an eruption of colour as blossom, tulips and wisteria take centre stage

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD PHOTOGRAPHY JASON INGRAM



The pace of change in the garden is quickening. It's still chilly in the early morning but later the sun gives real warmth and though the beech topiary still clings to last year's leaves, the crab apple blossom and wisteria have burst into their full spring glory and the air is full of scent.

All through the winter, Allt-y-bela has felt very strongly connected to the landscape. The boundaries of bare-branched hedgerows are at their most transparent, and the eye roams outwards, taking in the patterns of the hedge lines and trees in the fields around, as much as the garden itself. In spring, however, this changes as the garden immediately around the house becomes more intense and the feeling more intimate. It begins in a subtle way with the swathes of snowdrops followed by the native *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* that sweep over the common and through the hazel drove. Their mass flowering starts to bring the main focus of interest back into the garden. By the time the crab apple flowers emerge, when the first real sustained warmth from the sun triggers the explosion of blossom, then it is the garden, not the landscape, that holds the eye right through until the autumn.

In early spring, the garden within the immediate vicinity of the house contains all the colour, all the 'jewels' of the season. In these first warmer days I find we still don't travel too far from the house; we might have a cup of coffee on the bench under the window but we don't yet wander off to have lunch in the orchard. Right now, it's close to the house that the planting can be appreciated. The boughs of the pleached *Malus* 'Evereste' are a complete froth of blossom and give the impression of a soft veil enclosing the courtyard garden, making it feel intimate and special – a protected environment. It is here that I grow rare bulbs and delicate flowers, below the evergreen structure of a mass of standard clipped box balls. I added tons of ►

1 *Tulipa* 'La Belle époque' and *T.* 'Malika' with *Muscari armeniacum* 'Peppermint' in large pots are supported by a light woven willow framework that was made in early winter, and had the secondary role of decorating the pots before the bulbs pushed through.

2 Bulbs in pots by the house are one of the best ways to make an impact in early spring, and it is so liberating to be able to completely change them every year. They are the perfect place to alter the planting mood of a garden.

3 *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, known as the pasqueflower, grows wild on the calcareous grasslands of Europe and would hate the wet clay of most of the garden but thankfully enjoys the well-drained gritty soil in the courtyard beside the front door.

4 This *Wisteria sinensis* was one of the first plants I put in when we moved to Allt-y-bela ten years ago, and I love the way

its colour contrasts so beautifully with the house and that it now softens the building. Grown from a layered cutting of a wonderful ancient wisteria at a client's garden in Oxfordshire, it has the same amazing scent and colour as its parent.

5 In pots it's possible to enjoy a small number of special bulbs that would be lost in a border. This incredibly dark, almost black *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Dark Dimension' is a rarity very worth seeking out. It is expensive, but the depth of colour is so striking that a very few bulbs make an impact, and they excite much comment.

6 I call the courtyard garden my Cabinet of Curiosities as this is where I grow rare bulbs, including *Tulipa* 'The Lizard' and *T. orphanidea* var. *whittallii*, and favourite plants, such as the wonderful, dark *Primula* Cowichan Garnet Group (from Barnhaven Primroses, barnhaven.com) that play hide and seek beneath the skirts of the clipped box on clear stems.







1



2



3



▷ grit to the soil in this courtyard to keep it as free draining as possible for plants and bulbs, which might rot elsewhere in this wet Welsh climate. To protect them further, I grow my most treasured rarities of all in pots, often supported with simple woven hazel and willow supports to stave off the inevitable collapse that comes with bulbs towards the end of their flowering.

The pots bring the garden even closer to the house. By siting them on the wall by the gate or the kitchen windowsill, you can pause to admire them every time you walk through the door. I fill them with rare hyacinths or fritillaries and even bring the pots into the house to adorn the kitchen table for supper, putting them out again the next day. Having bigger pots of tulips against the house wall is a wonderful way to experiment with new colour combinations every year. We remove them when they've died back and store the bulbs over summer before planting them out in the meadow under the orchard in November. It's left to the principle of survival of the fittest to determine which ones, and what colour combinations, will flower in the grass.

The delicate species *Tulipa orphanidea* var. *whittallii*, which despite its origins (it comes from the hills of western Turkey where it bakes in the hot, dry summers) seems to be thriving in the grassy banks by the drive and in the courtyard and I'm hoping that they will eventually seed out and increase in number. It's a small, neat tulip with curiously subtle colouring: a soft orange with an olive-green base and pale creamy-yellow central ribs on the outer petals, giving it an interesting faint stripe. A few ▷

1 The early morning light catches the creamy *Tulipa* 'Mount Tacoma', which is mixed with *T.* 'Mistress' and *T.* 'Malika' in the two, long cutting flower beds flanking the path at one of the entrances to the kitchen garden. Planting tulips at this density means that I cut flowers for the house as often as I like through the season without the garden feeling denuded.

2 *Tulipa* 'Insulinde' is one of the rare 'broken' tulips that I started growing at Allt-y-bela a few years ago. Unlike most modern Rembrandt-style tulips, which resemble these 'broken' tulips, the incredible markings in these are actually caused by the tulip breaking virus, which can spread, something I encourage, because I enjoy the occasional break in colour that it causes in the tulips around it.

3 Having paths around the outer edge of the kitchen garden gives me the opportunity to stand more pots. These are filled with *Tulipa* 'Brown Sugar' and *T.* 'La Belle époque'. When the pots are smaller, I raise them on benches, like

the more formal 'pot stands' that you find in the corners of kitchen gardens in 17th-century engravings.

4 I love an abundance of blossom, so I plant fruit trees in many areas of the garden. At the centre of the herbaceous borders in the area I call the 'Cottage Garden', a goblet trained apple, trained to a drum of woven hazel, flowers above the emerging shoots of the perennials.

5 The lady tulip, *Tulipa clusiana*, in the spring meadow at the back of the house has performed extremely well for many years now. This is the straight species form, while I have *T. clusiana* 'Lady Jane' in the courtyard garden, which looks very similar but opens out and curls her petals charmingly as she matures.

6 The step-over apples that line the outer edges of the beds in the kitchen garden are kept tightly pruned so the blossom and later the fruit are close to the main stem, and don't crowd the crops or flowers in the beds.

▷ years ago, it was as rare as hen's teeth but has become much more available recently, making it possible to plant it en masse over a larger area where it looks magnificent. More permanent bulbs are growing in the grass of the spring meadow behind the house. Maybe best described as a 'bejewelled lawn', it starts with the flowering of the small *Iris reticulata* and special crocus, followed by the bright spots of *Anemone pavonina* and *Tulipa clusiana*, another beautiful, subtly striped species tulip.

At this time of year, the harder structural lines of the garden begin to disappear, even in the kitchen garden, where the beds are set out with regimental precision for productive cropping (and aesthetic balance). The blossom on the step-over apple trees, which line the outer edges of these beds, blurs the neat outlines of the raised oak beds. The beds themselves are just beginning to fill up with early salad leaves under glass cloches and a mass of tulips in the beds reserved for cutting flowers.

The deciduous topiary trees are starting to come into leaf, as are the hedgerows, a sign that soon the season will begin to race forward and the rest of the garden will catch up. The tulips and wisteria tell us it won't be long before we'll be in the full-blown, leaf-rich, flower-filled early summer garden. But enjoy this moment for the affirmation of spring renewal, the treasures emerging dauntless after the long winter. □

• Find out more about Arne's work and find detail of his courses at arnemaynard.com
Look out for the next instalment in the series in our May 2016 issue.

1 Long grass by the drive, is studded with spring flowers: primroses, cowslips, oxslips and snake's head fritillaries and my favourite *Tulipa orphanidea* var. *whittallii*. These beautiful flowers are fleeting, but siting them where we pass by them every day gives us the chance to appreciate the whole period of their performance.

2 Three *Magnolia* 'Sun Ray' are planted near the drive, as you approach the house. I love the fresh creamy-lemon purity of their flowers, which links so well with the pale yellow oxslips and the primroses on the grassy banks.

3 By the canalised stream I planted a bank of grass against the stone walls with *Iris pseudacorus*, again deciding that the native yellow felt more natural and ancient than the pale blue of *Iris pallida*, which I also considered planting here.

4 I like the delicacy of the species tulips when I'm planting into a predominantly native flowering grassy bank. *Tulipa orphanidea* var. *whittallii* makes a

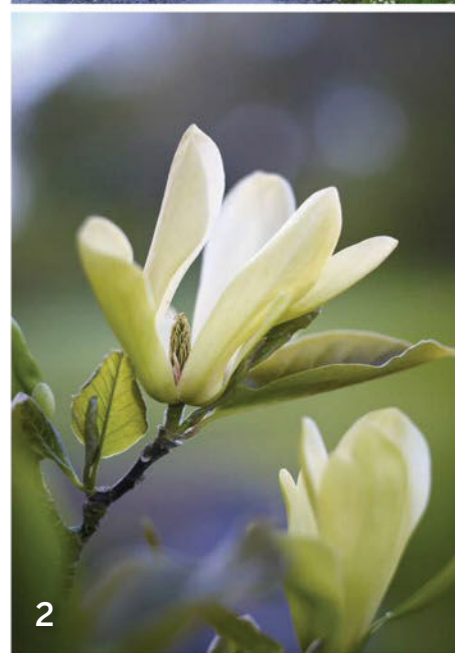
wonderful impact with its beautiful orange colouring, but is much softer than a cultivated tulip would be in the long grass.

5 These *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Aurora' (or 'crown' imperials) with all their flamboyance really resonate with the more elaborate details of the house. They date back to a similar period (1590) and, as the name suggests, they bring a bit of courtly grandeur to the place. I've kept the opulence in check by planting them among woodland grasses (*Melica nutans*) on the side of the drive to the barn, another route that we take many times a day, so there is no chance that we might miss their splendour.

6 The light dances rather wonderfully on the water below the alders, but even when the sun is not out, the bright yellow of the native kingcup brings a real sparkle to the stream edge and lights up the water with its reflections. I used to steer clear of using yellow but, particularly in spring, the wonderful lift it can give is winning me over, as I find with other plants now.



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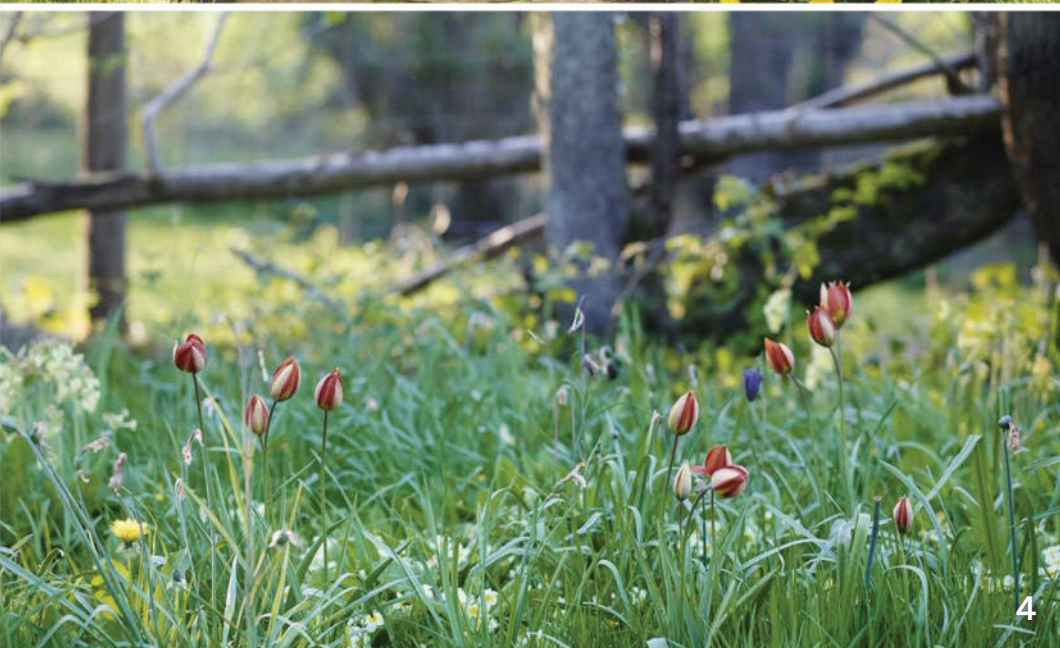
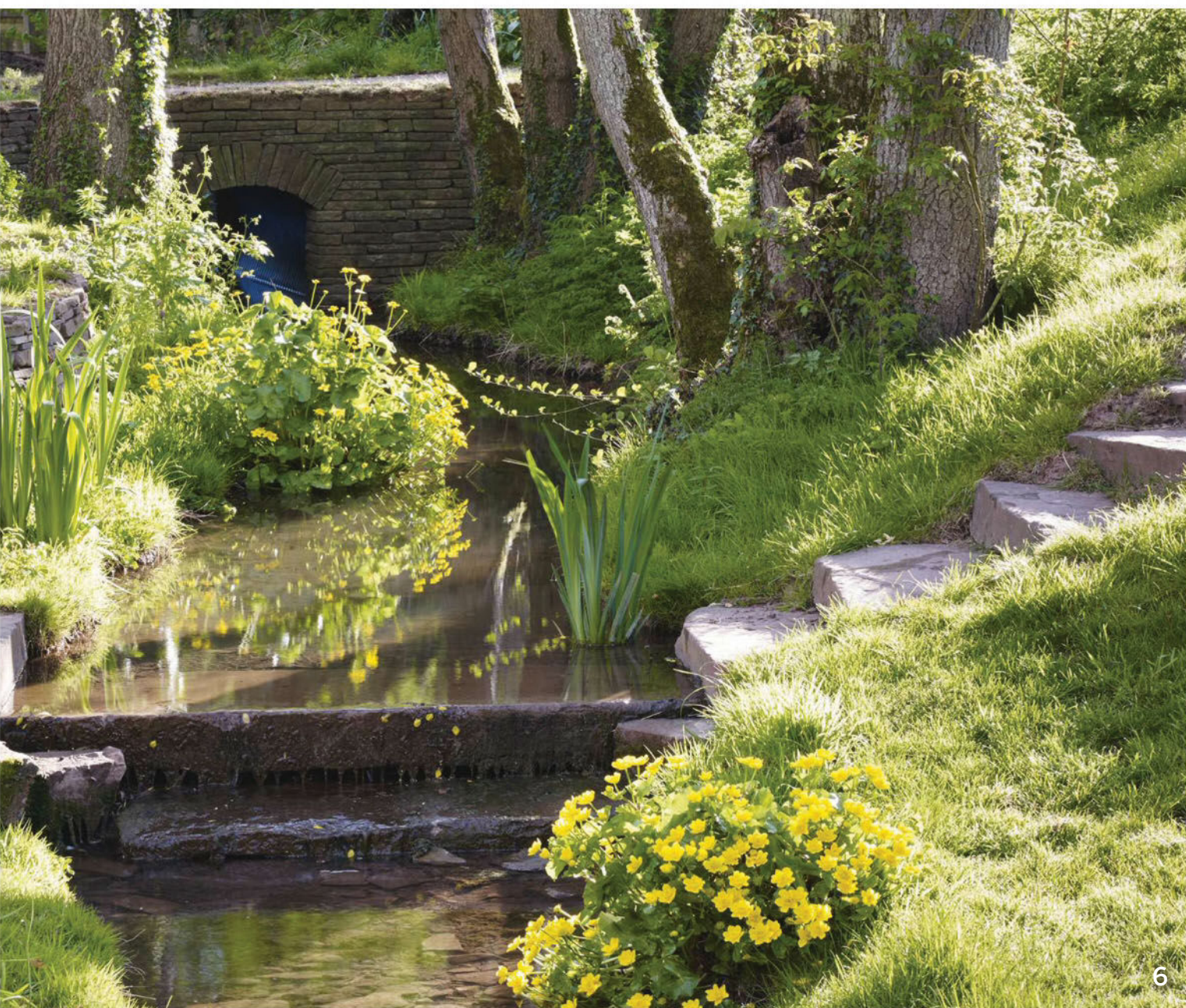


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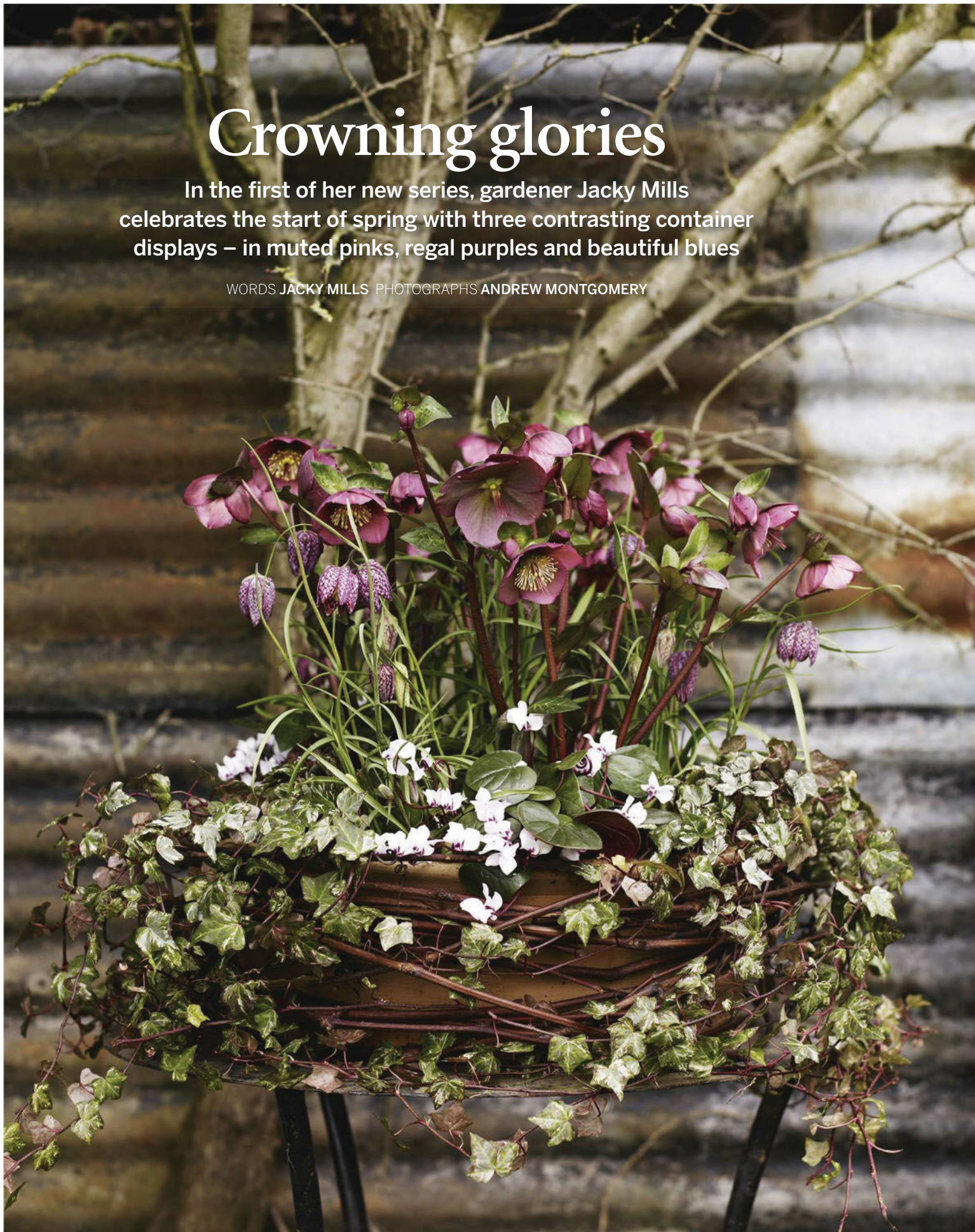




Crowning glories

In the first of her new series, gardener Jacky Mills celebrates the start of spring with three contrasting container displays – in muted pinks, regal purples and beautiful blues

WORDS JACKY MILLS PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY





Ethereal elegance

I was inspired to use grape vines after seeing some beautiful creations in the wine regions of southwest Germany. Rather than wait for our local Herefordshire vineyards to prune their vines, I used prunings from a wall-trained *Vitis coignetiae* instead. Interwoven with trailing ivy, these helped to soften a rather bulky terracotta pan, creating a nest effect. The deep, wine-red hues of the stems set the tone for the planting scheme.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

The dusky pink flowers of *Helleborus* (Rodney Davey Marbled Group) 'Penny's Pink' held aloft on upright stems take centre stage. The marbled foliage complements the pale streaks on the ivy (*Hedera helix*) leaves; their slight reddening enhancing the overall smokey hue. The maroon lanterns of *Fritillaria meleagris* amplify the purple tones, while splashes of white from the *Cyclamen coum* f. *pallidum* 'Album' bring light to the base of the planting. These dainty flowers appear to have been dipped fleetingly into a pot of magenta ink that perfectly matches the vibrant pink underside of the heart-shaped leaves. The sculptural coils of the seedheads are an added bonus.

Container, cultivation and care

Woven winter prunings and ivy helped disguise an unremarkable pot. Other twiggy material, such as *Cornus* or willow prunings, would also work. Although best used fresh for maximum pliability, dried willow can be soaked beforehand. Vine wreaths are also available commercially. As the pan was fairly shallow, I added lots of leaf mould and a little grit to a John Innes No.2 compost to improve moisture retention. The container needs to be placed in a partially shaded spot away from drying winds. The season can be extended by the addition of *Ajuga reptans* 'Pink Surprise' or, for a more contemporary feel, partner white-flowered hellebores and fritillaries with a dark green ivy and white *ajuga*.

Plants (see above left)

1 *Helleborus* (Rodney Davey Marbled Group) 'Penny's Pink'

A relatively new hellebore, named for the designer Penelope Hobhouse, with prolific deep-pink flowers and silvery, marbled evergreen leaves. 40cm. USDA 6a-9b†. January – April.

2 *Cyclamen coum* f. *pallidum* 'Album'

An early flowering, ground-cover plant with delicate white flowers held on slender stems above the foliage. 8cm. USDA 6a-9b. January – May.

3 *Hedera helix* 'Calico'

A trailing ivy with small, three- to five-lobed, grey-green leaves. 2m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-10b. Year-round interest.

4 *Fritillaria meleagris*

Delicate purple tessellated bells that thrive in a moist soil in summer. AGM*. 30cm. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b. April – May.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



A hit for the senses

In late winter, it's so therapeutic to indulge in a hit of colour and scent when our senses are at their most deprived. The brilliant purple spikes of *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Woodstock', with their powerful fragrance, matched with the intensity of the purplish-pink flowers of *Viola* 'Kim', provide both. I've used a combination of plants so that when these flowers fade, the rest become a study in form and texture. The overall effect, placed on a table sheltered from strong winds so you can appreciate the scent, really brightens up a partially shady corner.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

This sweet violet is just one of many cultivars available today. Its delicate little flowers with darker buds are held beautifully above the rounded, spring-green leaves. These contrast with the pewter, veined leaves of *Helleborus lividus* 'White Marble'. The creamy, acid-green flowers that appear from late winter increase the vibrancy of the hyacinth and violet.

The Japanese spurge, *Pachysandra terminalis* lends another texture and base colour to the planting with its smooth, glossy green leaves and produces clusters of white flowers in late spring. I added some *Dryopteris erythrosora* var. *prolifera* the lacy, clump-forming autumn fern, towards the

back of the planting. Its delicate fronds emerge as the other flowers fade.

Container, cultivation and care

I bought this old, French, galvanised tub from a junk shop and drilled holes into the base for drainage. A layer of crocks and gravel prevent these holes clogging up and a mix of John Innes No.2 compost with extra grit, improves drainage further. When the plants outgrow the container, they can be planted out into shady areas of the garden, the rhizomatous sweet violet and spurge making great evergreen ground cover. The ferns thrive in moisture-retentive soil, so incorporate plenty of leaf mould.

Plants (see above)

1 *Pachysandra terminalis*

Evergreen perennial with glossy, leaves and erect spikes of small flowers in spring. 20-30cm. RHS H4, USDA 4a-9b. May – June.

2 *Hyacinthus orientalis* 'Woodstock'

Hardy bulb that can be potted up early and brought indoors to flower in January. 5cm. USDA 3a-7b. March – April.

3 *Helleborus lividus* 'White Marble'

This beautiful Majorcan species is tender, but can be enjoyed outside in a container you can move inside. 30cm. USDA 8a-9b. February – May.

4 *Dryopteris erythrosora* var. *prolifera*

This prolific copper shield fern is evergreen in mild winters. AGM. 60cm. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9a.

5 *Viola* 'Kim'

Sweet violet with distinctive purple, sweetly scented flowers. 10-30cm. USDA 4a-9b. March – April.







Spring it on

The arrival of spring is always a time for gardeners to celebrate, but we can often overlook some of the smaller flowering bulbs, such as the lovely, classic grape hyacinth. Planting them in pots to bring indoors not only allows us to appreciate their beauty in greater detail, but it is also a great way to experiment with new bulbs in small numbers. I planted these in some embossed copper containers, made by my mother, to give the arrangement a personal touch.

How to achieve the look

Colours and shapes

The deep-blue flowers of *Scilla siberica*, are intensified by the creamy-green spikes of *Muscari aucheri* 'White Magic'. These pointed green buds will become more rounded as the flowers develop. Planted in the ground they would be much more compact and a deeper green. For a bold contrast, I included a *Haworthia pumila*. This tender South African genus includes many lovely, architectural plants, forming thick rosettes of toughened leaves speckled with white tubercles.

Container, cultivation and care

There is a plethora of stunning copper pots on the market today, from shimmeringly modern to verdigris antique. Here, copper sheeting

was cut to size, embossed using a stylus and the relief highlighted with stain before wrapping it around an assortment of plastic containers. The bulbs were potted up in autumn, using a loam-based compost with extra sand for drainage and leaf mould for the squills as they appreciate humus-rich soil. These were left outside in a sheltered spot and brought into the polytunnel in January to encourage early flowering. I popped them into the copper containers as they came into flower, top dressing them with garden gravel. These bulbs require plenty of light but not direct sunlight and will benefit from a liquid seaweed feed after the display has finished. Leave the foliage to die down before planting out in lawns or borders.

Plants (see above left)

1 *Scilla siberica*

Originating from southwest Russia, the Caucasus and Turkey, this squill has dainty spikes of blue flowers with strappy leaves. AGM. 15-25cm. RHS H5, USDA 2a-8b. March – April.

2 *Muscari aucheri* 'White Magic'

One of the best white cultivars available and very fragrant. 15-25cm. USDA 4a-8b. April.

3 *Muscari armeniacum*

Fragrant blue flowers followed by decorative seedheads. AGM. 15-25cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b. April – May.

4 *Haworthia pumila*

A slow-growing *Aloe* relative that can be propagated from offshoots. It evolved to cope with harsh, dry environments, so is hard to kill through neglect. Best grown as a house plant. Water sparingly. AGM. 15cm. USDA 10a-11.

In Brief

What Spring-flowering woodlanders with flower, sepals and leaves arranged in threes or sometimes multiples of three. Some have stalkless flowers, while others bear slender stalks topped with small flowers.

Origins Debate rages about how many species there are, as many variations are found in the wild. There are around five or six native to eastern Asia, while the rest, around 43 species, are from North America.

Size Up to 60cm, but when happy trilliums will form wide clumps.

Conditions Rich loamy, humus-rich soil in light shade. A leaf litter mulch helps to keep the soil cool and may make the soil slightly acidic, which trilliums prefer.

Trilliums

These shade-loving plants can be tricky to grow and are often pricey, but they are worth the extra effort and expense

WORDS VAL BOURNE PHOTOGRAPHS LYNN KEDDIE

Trillium grandiflorum

f. *polymerum* 'Flore Pleno'

The most desirable trillium of all for most gardeners, with double white flowers set above all-green foliage.

It's later than the single form and doesn't set seed because most forms are sterile. Propagation demands division and this makes it expensive, but the fully petalled flowers last much longer than the single forms. 45cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b†.



Val Bourne

is a garden writer and lecturer and judges plant trials at RHS Wisley.

I've had a life-long love of trilliums, captivating spring woodlanders with tricornes of leaf and flower. However it's been a bitter-sweet affair that began 50-odd years ago with some dried up rootstocks acquired from Woolworths. These shrivelled offerings were almost certainly plucked from the wild, in a less ethical era. They produced miserable plants so I moved on to other treasures, ones that would grow.

Twenty years ago I tried again, prompted by a trillium bought from an Alpine Garden Society show. I planted my pride and joy in the shade of a mature apple tree in my then dry garden on thin soil above ironstone. Friends in the same village, with better soil, had trilliums that expanded and self-seeded. But mine marked time for two or three years, and then went backwards. Trilliums need friable woodland soil that remains cool in summer. When I moved to a garden with a chilly climate and deep soil, I decided to try again and I've succeeded in a sheltered border created under witch hazels and mature trees.

This success is not only down to better growing conditions. Times have changed in the world of trilliums because collecting from the wild is no longer allowed. Luckily, former nurseryman Hugh Nunn grows plants and rhizomes raised from seed gathered from his own plants. Now retired, Hugh used to run a specialist nursery in Harvington near Evesham and has spent the past 30 years or so collecting, raising, selecting and naming trilliums. It's a slow process that can take up to ten years from seed to flowering plant. I know. When one of my own seedlings flowered I felt as though I'd given birth to twins. The long gestation means trilliums are expensive, but they're worth the price if you have the correct conditions of light shade and deep, friable soil. One of their common names, toadshade, conjures up just the right conditions.

The easiest for me is *T. kurabayashii* (see page 57), a North American species named in 1975 after the Japanese scientist Masataka ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ Kurabayashi who first identified it on the western coast of America. The sessile (stalkless) maroon flowers have three erect petals that rise upwards and nestle above three narrow bracts, which can be maroon. The large leaves, sometimes mottled, fill the gaps between the bracts and the whole arrangement is held on slightly splayed stalks so a good form of *T. kurabayashii* displays itself well in the garden. By late summer the seedpods resemble small, fleshy aubergines. I suspect the flowers are pollinated by flies as I've never seen a bee anywhere near mine. Some trilliums definitely have a meaty odour designed to attract flies, while others are sweetly fragrant bee magnets.

Trilliums are variable, even within wild populations so I'm planning to leave my fleshy trillium fruits to self seed on their own because some gardening friends further along the 'trillium road' get interesting seedlings. Hugh believes the genus is still evolving, hence the variation.

In the wild ants carry the ripe seeds away, attracted by the oily coating, so in theory seedlings can appear at considerable distance from the parent plant. Other good sessile trilliums for me include the beautifully fragrant *T. albidum* and *T. luteum*. I've found all three hardy and I hope to get hybrids, although not all species are compatible due to their differing chromosome counts.

I've done less well with forms of *T. grandiflorum* (see page 58), a really hardy species abundant enough in Ontario to be its provincial flower. The flowers are pedunculate, meaning they're held on stalks above the foliage. I have acquired single-flowered whites, double whites and pink singles and all flower in May and June, though not that happily. Perhaps my soil is too damp, for in the wild *T. grandiflorum* thrives on well-drained soil in beech and maple woods. My late friend Alan Bloom, who gardened near Diss in Norfolk, grew hundreds of *T. grandiflorum* in his often very dry, garden under heavy shading.

Hugh may have retired but his daughter Penny Dawson is continuing to provide trilliums through her online nursery Twelve Nunns. More reason than ever to try a trillium; you'll have a much greater chance of success than with a shrivelled one snatched from the wild. □

• Val's recommendations for trilliums continue over the next six pages.



T. erectum

This dainty trillium flowers early, and loves acid soil. Its petals (normally wine-red) and green sepals, are held on a stalk above bright foliage. Can suffer frost damage. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.



***T. flexipes* 'Harvington Dusky Pink'**

A strong hybrid of *T. flexipes* and *T. sulcatum* that took Hugh Nunn ten years to select and raise. Its dusky pink flowers are framed by narrow, red-edged sepals, and the strong stems also have a pink-flush. 38cm.



T. sulcatum

Broad-petalled, wine-red flowers, with quilled, dark and narrow sepals behind, are held on stalks above large, rounded leaves. The flowers, which curtsy slightly, smell musty and attract flies. 45cm. USDA 3a-9b.



T. vaseyi

A sweetly fragrant, maroon-red trillium that carries its flowers under the foliage on an almost horizontal stalk making the flower look as though it's nodding. Hides its flowers perhaps a little too well. 60cm. USDA 5a-8b.



T. kurabayashii

A showy species with sultry red-to-purple bracts and sepals above strongly marked foliage. This particular form was sourced from Harvington Clone A, a seed-raised trillium, which means that variations can and do occur as is generally true for many seed-raised trilliums. 50cm.

***T. flexipes* a Harvington selection**

A good selection from *T. flexipes* with rounded green foliage topped with cream-white flowers and a pale pink ovary (rather than the usual creamy-white one). This strong-growing trillium is tolerant of lime, being found naturally on wooded limestone slopes. 50cm.





T. grandiflorum

Possibly the best-loved trillium, with full-petalled, large, white flowers that can vary in size and are held on stems above dark-green foliage. Flowers later than many in May and June. 45cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.



T. simile

Each of its creamy-white flowers has an attractive dark eye in shades of purple and midnight-blue, resembling a miniature clematis flower. It clumps up well in humus-rich, damp soil. 45cm. USDA 3a-9b.



T. 'Harvington Star'

An elegant, creamy-white hybrid of *T. simile* (above right) and *T. flexipes* 'Harvington Selection' (left). Narrow petals, separated by slender green bracts, form starry flowers with a dark red ovary at the centre. 40cm.



T. albidum

A showy, early flowerer with freesia-scented, pale flowers and lily-green bracts set above green-veined, slightly ruffled foliage that can be splashed in shades of grey-brown and creosote. 50cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

How to cultivate

For best results start off with good material, preferably a pot-grown trillium that has more than one flower, or you could buy a rhizome from a nursery specialising in trilliums.

- Trilliums, which need friable soil that holds moisture but is free-draining, are best grown under deciduous trees and shrubs. Provide shelter from summer sunshine and autumn winds, and give them space to shine. Dress with well-rotted leaf litter in late autumn, but do not cover the crowns.

- If you choose to plant rhizomes, these need to be planted as soon as they arrive, in friable soil enriched with leaf mould or leaf litter, and planted with their tip just below the surface.

- Feed your trilliums to keep them in leaf for as long as possible. Sprinkle a slow-release fertiliser, such as Vitax Q4 (vitax.co.uk), round them in late winter and then foliar feed them with seaweed extract.

- Ideally, clumps should be left undisturbed, but if you need to divide them, do so in May, June and July when the leaves are still attached.

- Seeds need to be sown when ripe. Plant societies, such as The Alpine Garden Society (alpinegardensociety.net), often have them on their seed list.

- You'll need patience if growing from seed. Nothing will appear for 18 months as trillium seeds need two warm spells and two cold spells. Eventually, single leaflets (reminiscent of a lily) will rise up and then go dormant within a month or so. The pot must be allowed to bake in summer and then be subjected to cold in winter. The process is repeated over several years, usually seven, before a flower appears. Nurserymen speed the process up by placing the tiny rhizomes in a refrigerator for six weeks, to shorten the dormancy period. They also score mature rhizomes behind the terminal bud to encourage new growth.

- Once established, trilliums endure without disease, but slugs will crop seedlings and plants. Once they emerge keep slugs at bay, as they can, and do, mar the foliage and flowers.

Suggested combinations

Trilliums work well with fellow woodlanders erythroniums, which flower at a similar time and enjoy similar conditions. *Erythronium californicum* 'White Beauty', *E. revolutum* 'Knights Hayes Pink' and *E. 'Hidcote Beauty'* make particularly good companions.

- Ferns, especially the black-bristled Himalayan form of *Dryopteris wallichiana*, also work well. Cut back in late-autumn it will produce new fiddle-necked fronds in late April without harbouring slugs (as polystichums can) or impinging on trillium growth. Maidenhair ferns also make good companions, because they become dormant during winter.

- Other good companions include hepaticas, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, snowdrops and hellebores.

Where to see

- **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**
Arboretum Place,
Edinburgh EH3 5NZ.
Tel 0131 248 2909,
rbge.org.uk

Where to buy

- **Edrom Nurseries**
School Road, Coldingham, Eyemouth,
Berwickshire TD14 5TZ.
Tel 01890 771386,
www.edrom-nurseries.co.uk
- **Twelve Nuns**
16 Carisbrook Grove, Stamford,
Lincolnshire PE9 2GF.
Tel 01778 590455,
twelvenuns.co.uk
Mail-order nursery run by Hugh Nunn's daughter, Penny Dawson, which sells a range of rhizomes and plants raised on the nursery, including many bred by her father.



T. ludovicianum

Known as the Louisiana trillium, this has strongly marked leaves and erect flowers, which can vary from green through to purple. The wavy-edged petals are set around upright, wide stamens. 30cm. USDA 7a-8b.



T. rugelii

Broad, green foliage and a curving stalk that tucks the flower under the foliage typify this robust species. Its distinctive flowers have strongly recurved petals that turn back on themselves. 45cm. USDA 3a-9b.



T. rivale

This small trillium with red-speckled white flowers loves stream edges, but will need drainage and moisture to do well. Less hardy than some, it's often grown in an alpine situation. 15cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.



T. luteum

As its name, yellow wood trillium, suggests, this showy trillium needs shady conditions. Stays in flower for weeks so very garden worthy and colour develops as flowers mature. 30cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

T. grandiflorum f. roseum

Cool-pink flowers, rather like most montana clematis in colour, held above all-green foliage, which has a red picotee edge due to presence of anthocyanin. Pink forms are locally frequent in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Kentucky, although Hugh Nunn's pink forms originated in Virginia. 45cm. RHS H5.



Katherine Swift

The garden historian and writer reveals why she feels she's living a double life, her need for silence, space and solitude, and her surprising love of classic motor cycles

WORDS CAMILLA SWIFT PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

I'm Persephone," says Katherine Swift, the gardener, writer, columnist and author of the acclaimed *The Morville Hours*. By way of explanation she describes her life as defined by darkness and light. Six months outside in the garden; six months inside, writing. I catch this wisp swamped by a jumper made for two, in determined writing mode, her mind feverishly knitting together the strands of her latest book. Strands are important in Katherine's life.

She has three rooms where she writes by electric light, with heavily lined curtains tightly drawn, so she cannot tell whether it's summer or winter, day or night, and won't be distracted by the garden. She loves writing but finds it hard. "But then, of course, if it wasn't hard everyone would do it," she says. She can spend an afternoon putting a comma in then taking it out again. By April, the start of time outside, she's desperate not to stop. So many loose strands, so much still to say.

Books and gardening in equal measure. She spent an isolated, bookish and silent childhood with a distant elder brother and disappointed parents in a difficult relationship. They moved constantly, houses crammed with books, Katherine's father always planting a garden. "Like tent pegs hammered into the ground it anchored us." For Katherine, being grown up was defined by having a garden full of fruit and veg – beauty, utility and fruitfulness – and all these remain principal elements of her gardening ethos.

Another is garden history. After studying philosophy and English at Keele University she worked (for 20 years) as a rare book librarian at Oxford University and Trinity College Dublin, embarking in 1979 on a doctorate on 17th- and 18th-century library collections. People creating big aristocratic libraries, she discovered, were also making wonderful gardens. Determined to create a historical garden of her own, she moved, in August 1988, to Morville Hall in Shropshire with her then husband, "two removal vans of books, two carloads of plants, three cats" and, originally, a 20-year lease. She needed to convince her landlord – the National Trust – she knew what she was doing. Useless at planting plans, worse still at 3D visuals, she wrote her imaginary garden. The first guidebook written for a garden not yet started.

Now a sequence of garden rooms, including, of course, a formal fruit and vegetable garden, reflecting the different ages in Morville's rich history, the people who lived and worked there, has evolved gradually from a formal garden in a wild setting to a wild garden in a formal setting. And the visitors pour in.

Katherine works here, from dawn until after dark, all year, every day in all weathers and seasons – "often with only the church clock and an occasional cat for company". Fortunately, solitude is her idea

of bliss. She loves the silence of gardening. "Absence of words, space for the thoughts to come. A silence that allows you to listen," she says.

Early on she developed ME. Unable to garden she began writing instead, in pencil, tentatively on the backs of envelopes and odd scraps of paper; starting in the middle so she could pretend she wasn't really writing at all. The result, 14 years later, was the acclaimed *Morville Hours*. Within a framework of a medieval book of hours, is interwoven, like strands of brightly coloured silks, the days and seasons of the gardening year, with Shropshire history, tales of Morville village and occupants past and present, her own life, the lives of her parents, and a dusting of melancholy. Not the magnificent melancholy of Venice at Christmas but wistful, kindly.

Unsurprisingly, her favourite season is winter, with the garden stripped down, transparent. For her it's a beginning as well as an end, "when the frost gets to work in the garden to purge it of disease and decay". But there ought, she says, to be a law against August. "When the garden begins to run out of steam. So do I."

Her latest book, *A Rose for Morville*, a mere five years in the writing, rattles on apace. Starting where the *Morville Hours* ends, it's based around a walk she made between Good Friday and Ascension Day, taking in, en route, the five wild roses of Shropshire, geology, several churches, bell ringers, a hermit, medieval romance, her mother and the liturgy, which she describes as "a wonderful aesthetic object".

More strands. Her editor, she fears, is beginning to pale. And the most unlikely strand of all? Her passion for old motorbikes, a principally aesthetic pleasure fulfilled by an accommodating neighbour who once allowed her to ride his collection of pre-war bikes around his orchard. She was herself, until recently, the proud owner of a Harley Davidson Custom Cruiser. No full-on black leather "only the jacket" and no speed freak either, she just loved gliding slowly and noiselessly, while gazing at the countryside. I'm marginally relieved never to have met her on a narrow country lane. But it's another good reminder that gardening and gardeners are, as Katherine puts it, about "so much more than just gardens". □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Morville Hall, Morville, nr Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 5NB. Tel 01746 780838, nationaltrust.org.uk. See website for garden opening times. *A Rose for Morville* will be published by Bloomsbury in 2018.

NEXT MONTH Garden writer and designer, Stephen Lacey.

She began writing, tentatively on the backs of envelopes and odd scraps of paper; starting in the middle so she could pretend she wasn't really writing at all



A vertical challenge

In trying to create an inspiring modernist space in an exceptionally steep garden in California, Mary Barendsfeld came up with a solution that is playful, angular and utterly breathtaking

WORDS JODIE JONES PHOTOGRAPHY JOE FLETCHER

Steep gardens are not unusual in the San Francisco Bay Area in California but, even by local standards, the awkward, precipitous backyard that confronted landscape architect Mary Barendsfeld when she was called into work on the Hilgard Garden in the city of Berkeley presented a major challenge.

The townhouse dates from the 1960s and exudes a cool Japanese note – cedar shingled roofline, white walls, natural wood border details – that complements the owners' early modernist aesthetic for the interiors of the house. The garden, in contrast, looked as though a slice of mountain ravine had been winched into suburbia. Rising 5m along its 15m length, the backyard was all but unusable and totally out of keeping with its sleek surroundings.

Neighbouring properties dealing with the same vertiginous terrain have chosen conventional terracing, leaving their owners with an uninspiring view filled with soaring walls of ugly paving units. "This technique obliterates any sense of place," says Mary. "I was determined to retain the uniqueness of this site while resolving its considerable challenges." She adds: "I'm always driven to creating beautiful things that make people happy, but I have a responsibility to my clients to create spaces that solve their problems while meeting their desires."

In this garden, the solution she came up with is as bold as it is brilliantly unexpected. Stepping out from the house, through the floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and on to the shady ipe wood deck, a broad rill of water draws the sky down in reflected form. To the left, a carefully shaped Japanese maple (*Acer shirasawanum* 'Lovett') punctuates the polished timber. On the right is a white granite patio containing nothing but a sculptural table (the iconic Petal Dining Table designed by Richard Schultz in 1960) and simple white chairs. It is all beautifully judged, but not particularly exceptional. What completely takes your breath away is the remainder of the garden. More land art than landscape, ►

The lower garden area where the deep brown ipe wood deck on the left, which plays off the rich texture of the steel panels to the right, has in-built lighting to illuminate the *Acer shirasawanum* 'Lovett' and is separated from the white granite patio by a sky-reflecting rill. Your eye is drawn up the sculptural concrete walls to the juniper trees at the top of the site.



In brief

Name Hilgard Garden.

What A steep garden with an angular design that successfully merges architecture and landscape.

Where Berkeley, California.

Size 7m x 15m.

Soil Stiff rocky clay soils, possible ancient landslide debris (the site is close to a fault zone), that was ameliorated with a mix of compost, rice hulls and chicken manure.

Climate Cool with dry summers and wet winters.

Hardiness rating USDA 10a.



▷ the slope has been sculpted into a jagged series of interconnecting slices with board-formed concrete retaining walls that are brutal and beautiful to behold.

“The clients’ brief was simply to make the garden work,” says Mary. “They wanted an entertaining area by the house but also a seating area at the end of the garden, which has a great view over San Francisco Bay. Conventional steps would take up too much space, but integrating a ramped walkway through the changing levels allowed the access route to become an integral part of the design.”

The resultant zig-zagging lines are echoed by the careful placement of two more Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum* var. *dissectum* ‘Goshiki-shidare’ and *Acer palmatum* ‘Aureum’), leading the eye by the longest route up the slope. The remaining plant palette is limited to three different species – lemon thyme for aromatic ground cover, golden creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia* ‘Aurea’) to soften the hard concrete edges, and bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea* ‘Koi’) that sways in the breeze behind a Corten steel fence, which has been water-cut into a delicate tracery.

“Every element was carefully selected and then presented to be enjoyed in its own right,” says Mary. “In a site of great complexity, I strove for a design that was all about simplicity and restraint.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Mary’s work at barensfeld.com

Mary’s tips for steeply sloping gardens

I believe that architecture and landscape should always be thought of together but in a steeply sloping garden the relationship between house and garden becomes even more important. To carve out some outdoor living spaces, you will have to carry out earthworks, which will need to be professionally constructed for them to be safe.

When the slope rises away from the house, the retaining walls will become a dominant feature of the design so be sure to choose construction materials with intrinsic beauty, such as the board-formed concrete used here.

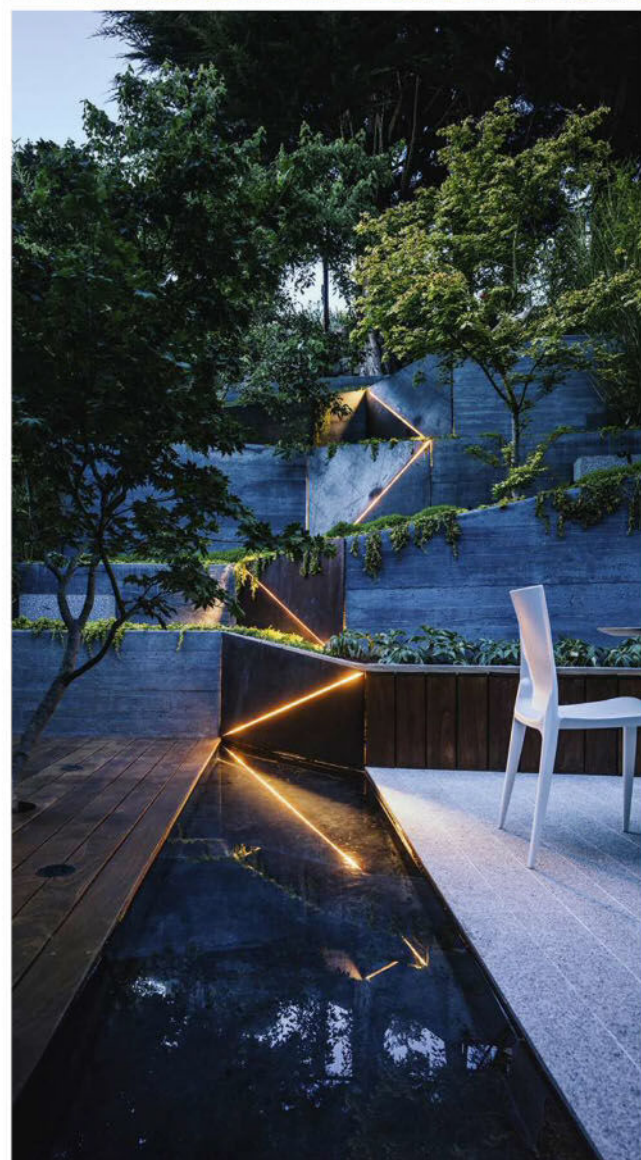
Trees are one of the first elements I consider. In terms of their importance as an organisational principle, they are as

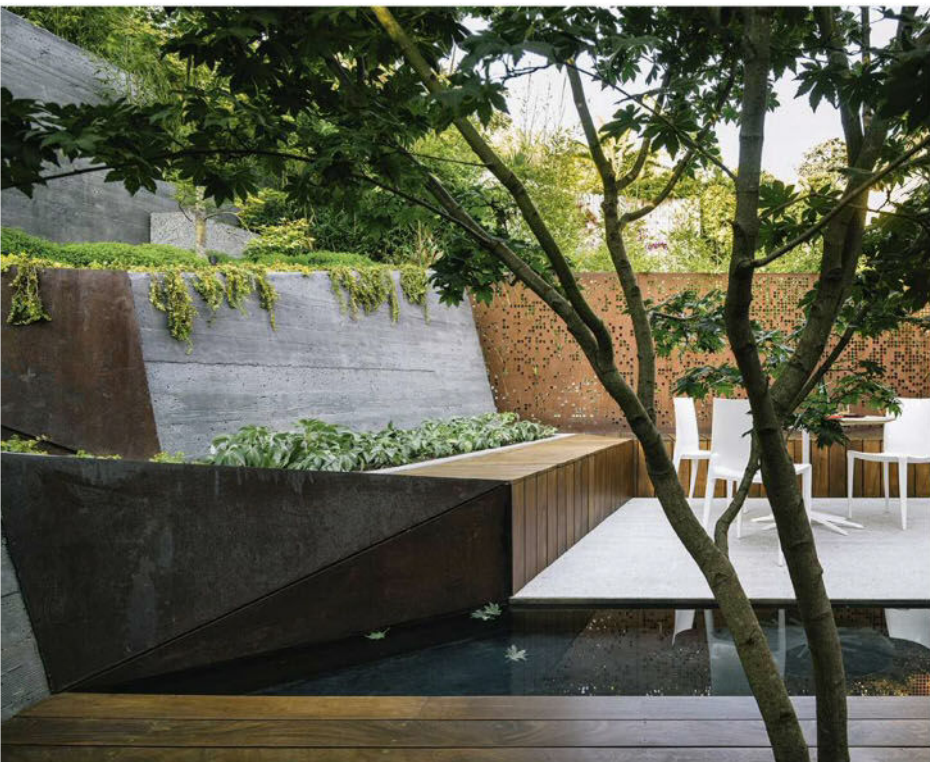
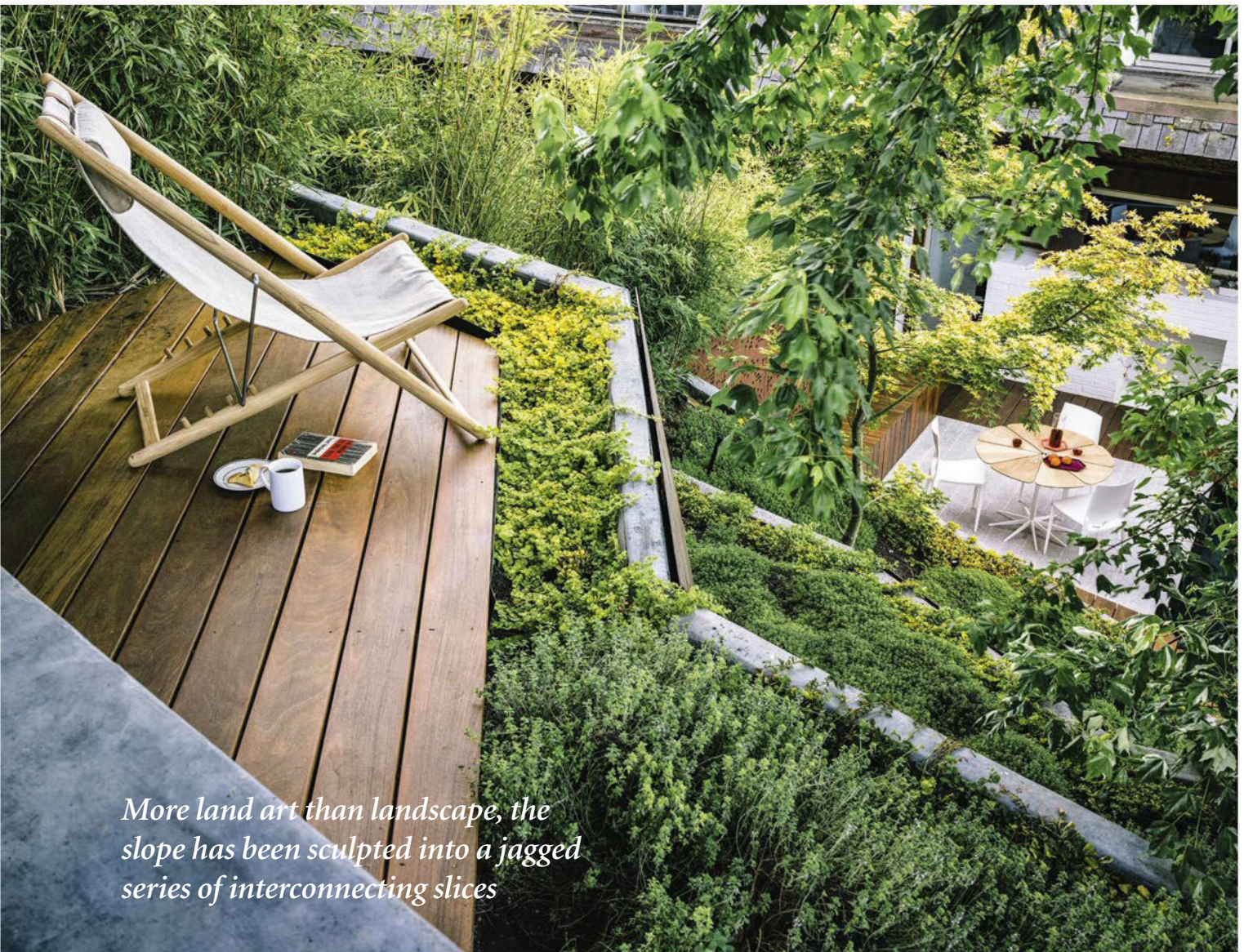
important to me as hardscape, walls or water features. In a sloping garden they are doubly important, introducing a strong vertical note while providing screening from neighbouring properties.

Small gardens usually work best with a limited plant palette for visual continuity, but on a steeply sloping site the lower portion is often in shade while the upper areas get more sun, so research carefully and select plants that will do well in both high and low light levels.

Reflective water is a wonderful way to bring the sky down into a garden where the terrain would otherwise block it out from most angles. Lining the pool or rill with dark material will increase the reflectivity to a mirror-like intensity.

Clockwise from top left An *Acer palmatum* ‘Aureum’ underplanted with lemon thyme and golden creeping Jenny, which help soften the concrete; the upper terrace at the end of the garden has views to San Francisco across the bay; an ipe wood storage bench and bamboo frame the beautiful rust-coloured, water-cut Corten steel screen; a view from beneath the Japanese maple on the deck; clever lighting emphasises the zig-zag lines at night.





Style on a shoestring

Charlotte Molesworth is known to many for her creative topiary, but few realise that the resourceful artist and design consultant, together with her husband Donald, have created their glorious garden using mainly recycled objects

WORDS FRANCINE RAYMOND PHOTOGRAPHY RACHEL WARNE

When Charlotte and Donald Molesworth married 35 years ago, they politely eschewed the usual range of wedding presents, and suggested instead guests bring “faded velvet curtains and unwanted yew and native hedgerow seedlings”. And it’s on the latter that the backbone of their garden is built.

At first glance you’d think this garden had been in the family for generations, probably the result of a team of gardeners’ work and certainly the product of several hard-earned fortunes. Of course the Molesworths have put their hearts and backs into their garden, but it’s their ingenuity and imagination that has given it its soul.

Creating a garden like this on a shoestring is an art. But combine Donald’s background in farming and Charlotte’s career in the arts (she used to work behind the scenes at the Royal Opera House and taught art at the local school) with their shared love of the natural world, and you have the right ingredients for the ideal garden.

In the early 1980s Donald had been helping to restore the garden of The Grange in the village of Benenden, Kent – once home to Collingwood ‘Cherry’ Ingram (the plant collector responsible for popularising flowering cherries in the UK) – and found, behind the village church, its forgotten kitchen garden.

It desperately needed to be rescued from dereliction, and the Molesworths



gardening on a budget

lost their heart. Somehow scraping together the purchase price, they bought the five-acre plot and buildings in 1983. Over time, the dilapidated bothy, piggery and potting shed were converted into a house, studio and barn. The garden gave them a blank canvas but drawing on genetic traits – all the women in Charlotte's family gardened and Donald grew up surrounded by plants – they eradicated years of bindweed and couch grass, levelled the ground, made a nursery bed and grew vegetables, and, of course, grew thousands of box cuttings.

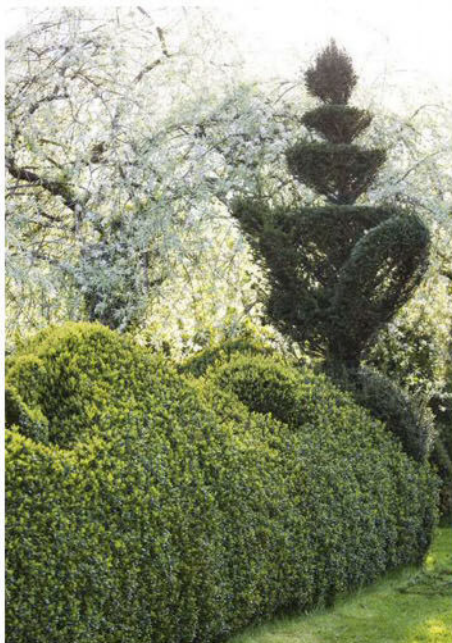
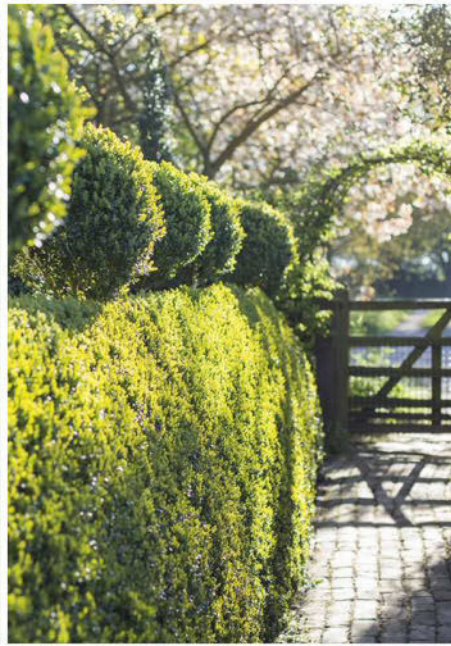
Bringing life to their garden over the past 33 years, and furnishing it with unusual pieces has been a pleasure, and Charlotte and Donald still go to farm sales and reclamation yards. Charlotte admits it's harder to find good pieces nowadays, but advises people to keep an eye out for building conversions and demolition sites that may have old agricultural and industrial pieces, if you see something you like it's always worth asking about it. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Charlotte is opening her studio and garden in June for South East Open Studios (seos-art.org). She also opens the garden (to groups of 12 or more) by appointment. Email charlotte@cdmolesworth.co.uk for details.

1 Hedging and topiary

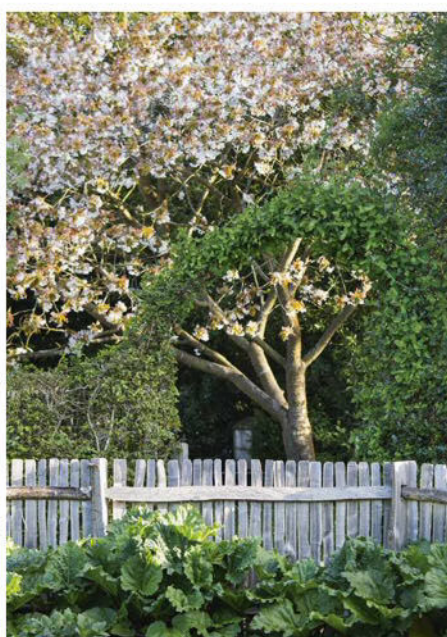
Both Charlotte's mother and aunt had topiarised plants, so it was natural Charlotte would do the same, starting with the hedges planted out from those wedding-list seedlings and cuttings. The hedges help to subdivide the garden, creating different atmospheres and a feeling of intimacy; they highlight a central vista, cut the wind and create habitat for birds. Charlotte sees shapes in the branches and then encourages them with extra support. She believes most hedges define their space after seven years, are pretty good at 14 and have reached their peak aged 21. ▷



2 Paths and gates

Bricks reclaimed from the garden are used to pave the main path to the front door, but other paths have been laid with new bricks (albeit over-fired, factory seconds) that have aged nicely. In the vegetable garden paths are made from hard-wearing crushed aggregate, topped regularly with ash from the range, while narrower walkways between beds are covered with either a strip of industrial conveyor belt material (see far right) or pebble-dashed concrete cladding blocks from a demolition yard, so the soil is never compacted or trodden on. The garden is on a slope, so it was essential to terrace a flat seating area near the house. Luckily, the old garden was full of large pieces of sandstone that now form the low retaining walls and edge the flower beds.

On grassy paths, old stable blocks have been used as stepping stones. Gates form eye-catching features as well as barriers. The larger ones come from farm auctions, some were skip finds and others were found in situ. The metal arch, en route to the nuttery (see right), was leftover from a wedding for which Charlotte arranged the flowers, and now supports hazel whips for scrambling sweet peas. The hazel bushes are coppiced regularly to provide staves for beanpoles, pea sticks, plant supports and kindling.



3 Fencing

The best wood for fencing is sweet chestnut, which is grown all over Kent. All the lathe fencing in the garden was provided by woodsman Deryck Body [issue 225, page 32], who can split an eight-inch chestnut pole into 32 pales. It's an ideal barrier against rabbits and helps contain the Molesworths' small flock of sheep. Deryck nails his fences on chestnut posts and rails, but paling is also available on wire rolls that can be moved around the garden where needed. The nearby Torry Hill Estate (torryhill.co.uk) grows chestnut wood for fencing, gates and posts.

5 Containers

On the terrace sit two large metal animal feeders now used as plant containers. An upturned third supports Charlotte's favourite terracotta pot (left), which she found abandoned in the vicar's garden. "Always ask," says Charlotte. "People are often delighted to pass on objects they've fallen out of love with". She repaired it with Milliput, a two-part epoxy putty, and filled it with *Arum italicum* 'Marmoratum'. Many of the terracotta pots were part of the original kitchen garden's fixtures and fittings, while chimney pots are used to add height to arrangements. ▶

4 Recycled objects

Most people go shopping when they need something. Not the Molesworths. "Buying isn't the first thing that comes to mind," says Charlotte. "People pass things on." With Charlotte's imagination, plastic citrus pulp barrels are transformed into water butts, and a metal pig swill boiler, found outside the old piggery (now her studio, below left), is turned into a plant container filled with *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' (above). Their slate dining table was stable flooring in a past life and stands on oak gatepost legs. Smaller stone tables are made from reclaimed stone slabs or water tank covers, their bases from York stone flags set on edge (right). The donated wooden garden furniture has been repaired with L-shaped metal plates, and sewing machine bases have been used to make a strong base for marble or stone table-tops (far right). Sinks make good planters and galvanised dustbins are just right for potting compost or securely storing chicken feed. Hens are the ultimate recyclers: everything is grist to their mill and then re-appears as eggs or manure. In the Molesworths' household nothing is wasted: "Someone else may need it if you can't find an immediate use for it," says Charlotte. "In some ways, it's horrifying what people throw away – in others, it's wonderful."



6 Summerhouse

One of the most charming features in the garden started life elsewhere as a swimming pool changing hut and has been transformed into a cottage ornée (right). The doors came from a friend's redundant conservatory and Donald cut the ornate fascia base from plywood, then decorated it with stag's horn oak branches that weather as strong as iron. The Molesworths have a second summerhouse, decorated by Charlotte with painted myrtle leaves, which they reserve for guests who rent their holiday let, the Potting Shed (thepottingshedholidaylet.com).



7 Seeds, polytunnels and greenhouses

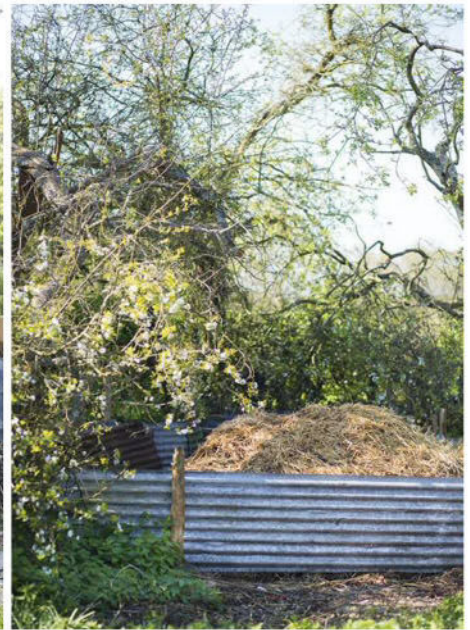
For the Molesworths, do-it-yourself propagation is what gardening is really about. They collect ripe seeds on dry days and store them in paper bags and old envelopes in a small cupboard that has ventilated drawers lined with wire mesh to deter mice. Any special seeds they don't swap with friends on garden visits, are given as presents, and excess plants are sold on Open Days.

The couple's ancient polytunnel was discovered derelict on the side of the A21 and bought for just £30. They've buried its metal supports deep into the ground to give it a lower profile. Its entrance has a rabbit-proof gate and, inside, a metal cage, re-enforced with weld mesh, has been installed to stop mice eating precious seedlings, cuttings and divisions. The pretty greenhouse (far left) was made from a mishmash of rescued doors and windows, lined with bubble wrap, although it has recently been replaced by a high-spec Keder greenhouse. Another new purchase is a hand-forged trowel from Niwaki, which Charlotte has bought to replace her mother's treasured trowel, retired after a lifetime's good use. When Charlotte buys something new she always makes sure it's the best available; what she considers an heirloom of the future.



8 Composting

Keen disciples of Maye E Bruce's 1956 book *Common-Sense Compost Making by the Quick Return Method*, the Molesworths compost everything – weeds, old clothes, cardboard, plus kitchen, garden and animal waste – in layers. First a green, growing layer, then one of manure (sheep, poultry or donkey), then a brown layer of straw bedding, paper and card. The compost bins, made from wooden pallets and corrugated iron panels (from a skip), are covered with leftover pond liner for a year. Leaf-mould soil conditioner is made in separate bays.



9 Taking box cuttings

Charlotte plants yew seedlings for strong hedges and takes box cuttings wherever she goes so she can try out different species. "*Buxus sempervirens* is the best all rounder," she says but adds, "*B. macrophylla* is good for big hedges. Look into a box hedge and you can see the small nodules – all potential new plants on the branches, crying out to root." To get the most from cuttings, Charlotte suggests the following:

- **Take cuttings on a dry summer's day** from ripe wood with a heel from two- or three-year-old growth. Trim the end leaves and cuttings will root readily.
- **Pop the cuttings around the edge** of a 15cm pot. Put eight to a pot, water occasionally and cover with a cut-down plastic bottle. Keep somewhere shady outside for two years in the same pot.
- **By the end of their first year**, the roots will be white, fleshy and too brittle to separate, but by year two, they will be brown and wiry and easy to tease apart.
- **Re-pot into separate 10cm pots** and grow on until the root system has recovered sufficiently to be planted outside and used for hedging or topiary.
- **Never feed box unless you're planning to grow it long-term in a container.** In other circumstances it will become too lush and be susceptible to disease. Box is a tough, hardy plant and shouldn't be mollycoddled.



The beauty of wood

Artist Wycliffe Stutchbury creates intricate mosaics made up of miniature tiles taken from old and abandoned pieces of wood

WORDS ROSANNA MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY



From his studio in East Sussex, Wycliffe Stutchbury breathes life into abandoned timber, creating his beautiful works of art.

Wycliffe's compositions undulate and graduate, feature creases and folds and, with their natural palette of colours and unusual textures, take on a look of something geological, almost prehistoric

B

e it an old gate post, a bench, an ancient piece of bog oak or the trunk of a fallen holly, whatever piece of wood artist Wycliffe Stutchbury discovers, he will meticulously fashion it into something altogether different from its original form. His art works tell a story of the timber's life, a timeline of sorts, charting the journey from fresh, raw wood, to rot and age. "I want to reveal the timber's response to its environment over time, its beauty, durability and vulnerability," says Wycliffe.

Wycliffe's works are made from thin tiles of wood, laid, mosaic-like into intricate patterns. The compositions undulate and graduate, feature creases and folds and, with their natural palette of colours and unusual textures, take on a look of something geological, almost prehistoric.

After working as a furniture maker for 15 years, Wycliffe decided in the late 1990s to turn his skills towards visual arts and took a BA in 3D Design and Craft at the University of Brighton, emerging in 2003 as a model maker fascinated by miniature forms. One day he was making a little hut with a tiled roof and hit upon the mosaic idea. "My first piece was made from roofing battens," he says. "Someone was having their Victorian house retiled in our street. The battens had all of these beautiful colours that came from the weathering over the years."

Since then, he has made many of these distinctive studies and sells through top London galleries. "I'm always led by the material I've found," he says. "I became obsessed with finding discarded timber. Garden fences, gates, roof joists. They have such beautiful colours and textures. I really like working with timber that's had a previous life or use and has the scars of that previous life."

He also uses holly and bog oak, which contrast beautifully – the paleness of the holly juxtaposing with the charcoal black of the oak, which has been preserved in the peaty environment of the Norfolk fens for 5,000 years. Using the two timbers in his collections gives a pleasant monochrome effect. "I use holly in its naked state cut straight from the tree," says Wycliffe. "It's as close to ivory as you can get in timber. It's less about colour and more about the relief and the shadows."

Wycliffe's process is long and arduous. The wood tends to be wet to start with so he leaves it to dry out for six months, cutting it into smaller sections halfway through. Then he uses the band saw to repeatedly reduce the timber down until he gets veneer-thick slithers (under a millimetre) that he cuts to varying widths. He creates the tiles by cutting the strips to length with a Japanese handsaw.

Old plastic soup pots come in handy for separating out the tiles according to what part of the gate post or trunk they've come from. Wycliffe numbers each pot to give him some sort of order when laying out the tiles, but leaves it to the tiles themselves to dictate the style of the mosaic he's working on. "I try not to interfere as I like to be led by the process," he says. Wycliffe glues the tiles to a thin piece of plywood board, arranging them piece by piece like a jigsaw. Each work is made from one particular bit of wood, so sizes vary according to the timber. His largest composition, a 4.5m bog oak work called *Methwold Fen*, took six months to lay out while most take about four to five weeks.

Wycliffe is currently working on a commission using a client's grandmother's garden bench. "I'm making it look like a roof of clay tiles that's collapsing," he says, sitting on a stool, leaning over his workbench and picking up a shard with some tweezers. "She loves astronomy. I like to think she can wonder whether it was hit by a meteor." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Wycliffe's work is sold through Contemporary Applied Arts, Sarah Myerscough Gallery and David Linley. See his work at *Another Life* at the Craft Centre & Design Gallery, Leeds, from 19 March to 25 June. Prices range from £400-£28,000. **Tel** 01323 721024. **Website** wycliffestutchbury.co.uk





Quiet charm

Behind an unassuming house, near a busy road in the Netherlands, is a garden of outstanding tranquillity and calming colour combinations

WORDS INA SPERL PHOTOGRAPHS SIETSKA DE VRIES

In brief

Name De Carishof.

What Private garden that makes good use of structure and colourful displays of bulbs in spring.

Where Klimmen, southern Limburg, the Netherlands.

Size Almost one acre.

Soil Loess – a chalky, clay-like soil.

Climate Mild maritime.

Hardiness rating USDA 8b.



In the orchard to the southwest of the house, willow baskets, inspired by those at the Prieuré Notre-Dame d'Orsan [issue 206, page 46] are filled with a selection of white narcissi, including *N. 'Mount Hood'* and *N. 'Stainless'*.

Left An avenue of birch trees linking the house to an old bakehouse has been underplanted with blue periwinkle.



*A*mong the rolling fields of southern Limburg – a hilly area in the very south of the Netherlands – is De Carishof, a white former farmhouse that dates back to 1640. The buildings enclose a large courtyard, so sheltered from the outside world, you'd never guess the house sits on a busy road. It's a perfect, hidden space with an umbrella-shaped plane tree, and rows of pots filled with tulips, ferns and box topiaries that line the half-timbered walls. If this house were in the city, you'd think this courtyard alone were a fine garden; but this is the countryside and the best is yet to come.

Just beyond the house a terrace provides enough space to sit comfortably in the sun, and behind this is a large border, framed with box clipped into soft curves, and a perfectly kept lawn that stretches towards a pond with an old willow. Further on from the lawn the garden seems to blend seamlessly with the fields and trees beyond. On the left-hand side is a greenhouse, on the right an old restored bakehouse, half hidden behind a group of birches.

All looks elegant and serene, which is exactly what Hans de Vree and his partner Henk Govers had in mind when they bought the house 14 years ago, along with their good friend, retired journalist Matthijs Smits, who like Hans is a keen gardener.

The garden already had a good structure of brick-paved paths and hedges, to which Hans and Matthijs carefully and gently added ideas of their own. "It was important to us that the garden should have a balance and emanate a calmness," says Matthijs. To the west of the house they turned a horse paddock into a lawn, and Hans planted a double yew hedge with seven *Rosa Iceberg* (= 'Korbin') standards in between. The hedges form a diagonal line that mirrors the angle of the main path linking the old garden with the new.

Beyond Hans's double hedge the cool colours of their 'great border' continue the garden's tranquil theme. In summer, this becomes a sea of blue, with *Delphinium* Blue Bird Group and *D. 'Magic Fountains Dark Blue'* standing tall among the *Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'. It took Hans and Matthijs a while to get their colours right. "We had a wild mixture in the beginning," says Matthijs, "but we got better every year."

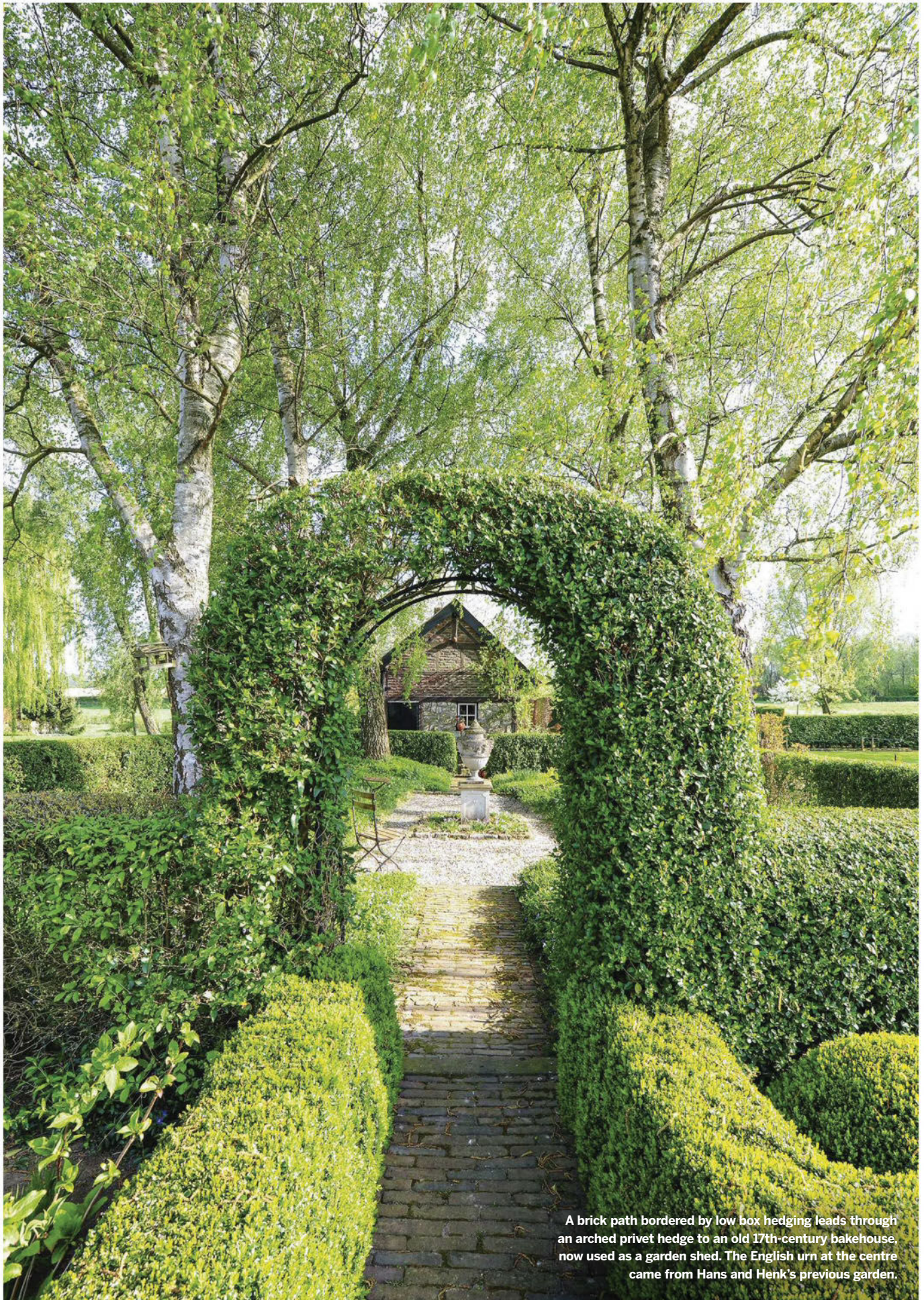
Only in spring is this cool restraint temporarily lifted when pots and borders near the house are filled with tulips and other bulbs in bright and well thought out colour combinations of oranges, ▶

Left from top

To the south of the house, a tall beech hedge, shelters a small vineyard, its stakes still bare in spring. Hans meticulously clips all of the garden's hedges – a mix of several different plants, including yew, copper beech and privet – that help divide the garden. To the right of the immaculate lawn is a long border filled with perennials and standard roses.

Spring is the only time of the year when 'warm' bright colours, such as these *Tulipa* 'Kees Nelis', are allowed in this otherwise elegantly 'cool' garden. Matthijs loves bulbs provided they're any colour but yellow: "Red, pink and purple are much nicer without the strong contrast," he says.

De Carishof's three owners, from left Henk Govers, Matthijs Smits and Hans de Vree, enjoy the spring sunshine on their terrace where pots of bright-red tulips add a vibrant splash of colour.



A brick path bordered by low box hedging leads through an arched privet hedge to an old 17th-century bakehouse, now used as a garden shed. The English urn at the centre came from Hans and Henk's previous garden.



The only colour banned in spring is yellow – “too dominant,” says Matthijs – although he’s happy to make an exception in the case of daffodils

▷ reds, pinks, including the pale *Tulipa* ‘Foxtrot’, and purples, such as the dark *T.* ‘Havran’, which works wonderfully among lavender. The only colour banned is yellow – “too dominant,” says Matthijs – although he’s happy to make an exception in the case of daffodils.

Matthijs, who grew up close to the vast tulip-growing fields near Amsterdam, loves the soil at De Carishof, which he says is excellent for growing bulbs. Last year he planted 6,000, protecting them from hungry mice with his secret weapon of freshly ground coffee, which he adds on top of each bulb before covering them with soil and topping with dry leaves mixed with cocoa shells.

Further away from the house, the bulbs return to the more muted colours that define this garden, with elegant white narcissi, such as *Narcissus* ‘Thalia’, *N.* ‘Stainless’ and *N.* ‘Mount Hood’, filling low willow fences around trees in the orchard.

Everything in De Carishof is beautifully arranged and perfectly placed – from the fruit bowl on the dining room table to the pots on the terrace – but there will always be opportunities to improve on perfection. When one of their willows fell recently in a storm, Hans and Matthijs were forced to rethink a former shady border. They have already selected *Monarda didyma* ‘Pink Lace’ and *Astrantia* ‘April Love’ to add to the new sun-loving mix. “We like to try new plants,” says Matthijs, “and if there’s any way we can improve the garden, we’ll do it.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address De Carishof, Retersbekerweg 12, 6343 PK Klimmen, the Netherlands.

Tel +31 (0)45 405 5690.

Website decarishof.nl/en

Open The garden will open on selected dates from April to June, and for groups of ten or more by appointment from mid April until mid September. See website for details.



Left from top

In the courtyard garden, pots filled with a selection of hostas, ferns and other plants, accompany two of Hans’s twisted topiaries. Hans also made the wreath from vine prunings from the garden’s small vineyard, as a decorative element for the white wall.

Many of the garden’s original brick paths and walls were left in place, but Hans and Matthijs have added to the structure with hedging, including the cloud-pruned box, which they brought from their previous gardens and which now reflect the area’s hilly landscape.

More cloud-pruned box helps to soften the sharp lines of a perfectly kept double yew hedge that Hans planted to the west of the lawn. Inbetween he has planted seven white *Rosa Iceberg* (= ‘Korbin’), and beyond is their great border with its mix of ‘cool’ colours. An *Acer palmatum* ‘Atropurpureum’ adds a splash of red colour in the background.



Soft green lines

Hedging plays a key role in creating structure at De Carishof, with four plants taking centre stage

Beech is a favourite hedge that needs cutting twice a year: in the first week of June and at the end of summer. It offers a beautiful, but short, burst of autumn colour and holds its leaves in winter, but these fall and clutter borders just when tulips are flowering.

Box is the easiest hedging plant to clip and stays neat with only

one cut in late spring. Some of De Carishof's box that was lost to the box tree caterpillar, has now been replaced with lavender.

Hawthorn is used to enclose the small orchard. It flowers white in spring and bears little red fruit in autumn. "We like it because it links our land with the landscape," says Matthijs. "But it

grows very fast and needs a cut every few weeks."

Yew is used to create both formal hedges and for other topiary shapes such as cones. The owners love it for its dark green colour. But as it's poisonous, they're careful not to use it near any of the adjoining fields where sheep graze.

Lighting the modern garden with **ELIPTA** the professionals' choice

Choosing the right lights for your garden can be a difficult task at the best of times.

Philip Milner, Technical Director at **Lighting for Gardens**, takes a closer look at some modern garden features that benefit from some simple lighting techniques.

The night garden can be magically transformed through lighting. Plants such as acers and geraniums which have translucent foliage will glow when lit from underneath. Architectural plants can be uplit to project striking shadows, creating a feeling of depth. This can make a space appear much larger than it actually is. Parts of the garden which may go un-noticed during the day can become centre stage at night. And if you want something to disappear it's easy – just don't light it.

If you are lucky enough to have a pergola you can mount hanging Pergolights or Moonrays on the crossbeams to down light the area below. Or you can make use of the structure to mount Compact Wall Spotlights for downlighting adjacent areas. For something really discreet you might consider one of the Microspot Wall Spotlights, which are really tiny.

You also have an opportunity to use recessed uplighters or spike spots to light the pergola from underneath. This can be surprisingly effective with climbing plants. The key to success is to use good quality lights which include some form of glare control; something which is conspicuously absent in many cheaper fittings. All our Compact Wall Spots and Spike Spots have the lamp recessed within the fitting to reduce glare, while many of our other lights have dedicated glare shields. The night scene is so much more effective when the eye is not dazzled by seeing the light source.



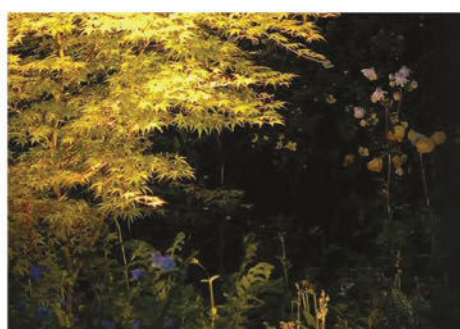
The Elipta Moonray is a decorative hanging light that has a perforated barrel and combines a downlighting beam with pin points of light through the side, to add fun and sparkle to a garden lighting scheme. Microspot spotlights are small enough to blend into a wooden structure, but bright enough to provide sufficient downlight for seating areas.

It is important to light the paths and steps sufficiently to make them safe by night. There may be enough ambient light already, but if you need more lighting there are plenty of tools available.

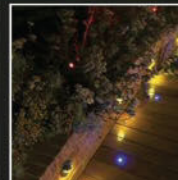
Spreadlights are an excellent choice where you want soft pools of light without glare. They are non-directional and subtle. If you need something a little brighter you might consider the Pole Spot Solo or Pole Spot Duo. Here the light is raised up just like with the Spreadlights, but the light source is more directional and can be pointed in any direction.

For lighting larger areas you might need something more substantial. So we have introduced a range of natural teak bollard lights that are more at home in a garden setting than the large metal constructions often found in pub car parks. If you need a bollard with excellent glare control you might choose the Stratus which has angled louvres. This is a good choice if you are concerned about light pollution.

For more lighting tips and to see the full range of **Elipta lights** go to: lightingforgardens.com



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design

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UPDATE COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

PLAYFUL ART

Climbing trees

The concrete courtyard at the entrance to the Youth Wing for Art Education at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem has been transformed by a contemporary treehouse built halfway up the trunk of an existing pine tree. The slatted wooden construction, designed by architects Ifat Finkelman and Deborah Warschawski, provides an elevated den that can be accessed via the elongated ramp or by clambering up the central pole. The undulating ground, covered with a soft rubber surface, is another play area. www.imj.org.il/en/



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DESIGN AWARDS
Nebulous sparkle

Crystal Cloud, a billowing canopy of hand-sculpted wire mesh hung with 800,000 Swarovski crystals above a black mirror pool, by landscape artists Andy Cao and Xavier Perrot, has been named winner for Installation in *Interior Design* magazine's Best of Year awards 2015. The sparkling installation forms the centrepiece of The Garden at Swarovski Kristallwelten in Wattens, Austria.



URBAN LANDSCAPE

Environmental thinking

Swales, rills, underground storage tanks and solar panels on living roofs all form part of a sustainable design by landscape architects Robert Myers Associates. Planting around the 240-home section of Ridgeway Village, a university-funded development in northwest Cambridge, will be informal against a foil of clipped hedges, with a number of native species linking the green spaces to the wider area. Large specimen trees, including oak and hornbeam, will provide focal points, while species of marginal plants in the swales have been chosen for their ability to cope with both wet and dry conditions. robertmyers-associates.co.uk

STARK CONTRAST

This distinctive bench designed by Simon Thomas Pirie is part of a new range of contemporary seats launched by Sitting Spiritually. The design combines natural oak with dark timbers, honed using the traditional Japanese Yakisugi method of scorching wood. The Floating Bench costs from £2,399 for a one-seater. Tel 01297 443084, sittingspiritually.co.uk





NEW GARDEN

A modern day paradise

The new garden at London's redeveloped and extended Garden Museum in Lambeth has been designed by Dan Pearson as a '21st-century Eden', providing a tranquil setting for the tombs of the Tradescant family and HMS *Bounty*'s Captain Bligh, which are in the graveyard of the church that houses the museum. Framed by three pavilions with connecting cloisters, it will retain existing trees and incorporate these into a planting scheme that includes many exotics inspired by the botanist John Tradescant's travels. The museum is due to reopen early 2017. gardenmuseum.org.uk

ART APPRECIATION

Historic England has listed 41 public sculptures by some of the greatest sculptors working in post-war England, including Knife Edge Two Piece by Henry Moore (below). The stories of these works are told in an exhibition at Somerset House in London. Some were considered too avant-garde when first installed, but are now being appreciated. Out There: Our Post-War Public Art is on until 10 April, somersethouse.org.uk



SGD AWARDS

French dressing

James Basson's harmonious landscaping of Les Canebiers (above top), a terraced Provençal country garden, swept the boards at the Society of Garden Designers Awards 2015, winning best International Garden, best Planting Design and the Grand Award. Arabella Lennox-Boyd won the Historic Garden Restoration award for Eaton Hall in Cheshire (above). sgdawards.com

Notebook

- There's still time to enter a new garden competition launching at **RHS Flower Show Tatton Park** this July. The RHS Young Landscaper and RHS Young Plant Designer of the Year competition is open to anyone aged 28 or under. Three winners of each award will be selected. To register, email exhibitorapplications@rhs.org.uk by 7 March.
- The title of the **Society of Garden Designers Spring Conference**, on 19 March, is State of Flux and it explores capturing the ephemeral in contemporary gardens and landscape. Speakers include James Basson and James Hitchmough. At the Royal Geographical Society, London SW7 2AR. sgd.org.uk
- The **Landscape Institute Annual Conference** at Sheffield University takes place on 3–4 March, with speakers Andrew Grant, James Hitchmough, Brian Evans and Caroline Julian. landscapeinstitute.org
- Book now for **Arne Maynard's summer courses**, including the three-day Creating Gardens with a Sense of Place at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire, 14–16 June, and the two-day Formality and Informality at Allt-y-bela and two gardens in Somerset and Devon, 22–23 June. See website for prices. arnemaynard.com
- Adam Nicolson, Juliet Nicolson and Sarah Raven lead a day on the life and gardens of **Vita Sackville-West** visiting Knole, Long Barn and Sissinghurst on 19 July. Costs £195. Tel 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com




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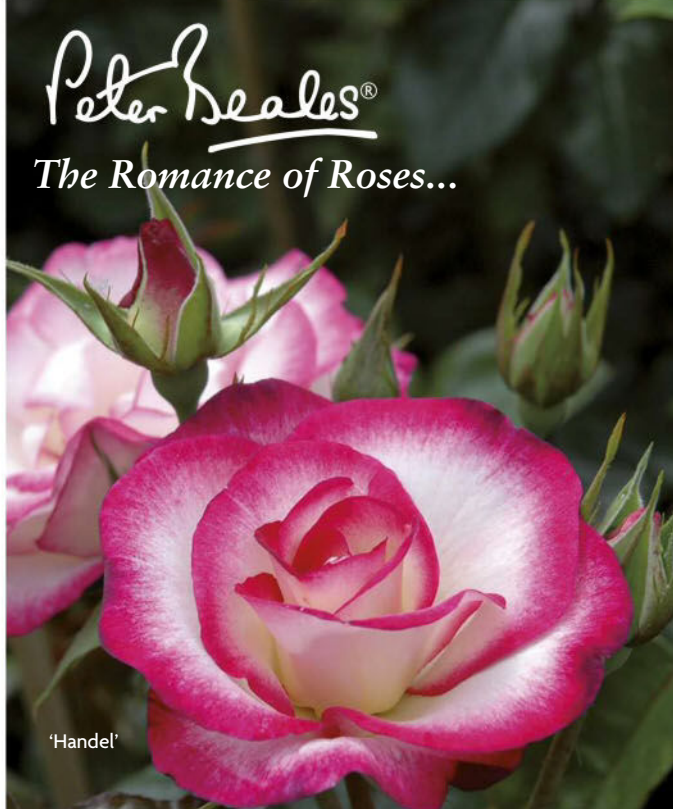

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1 Dividing lines

American landscape architect Steve Martino uses 'cool' receding colours and advancing 'warm' colours to distort perspective, rather like a set designer manipulating space. The strong colour planes of his 'walled gardens' reflect the stark light of the desert environment in which he works. Here, in a garden in Arizona, an orange wall captures the dramatic shadows of native desert succulents.



STEVE MARTINO

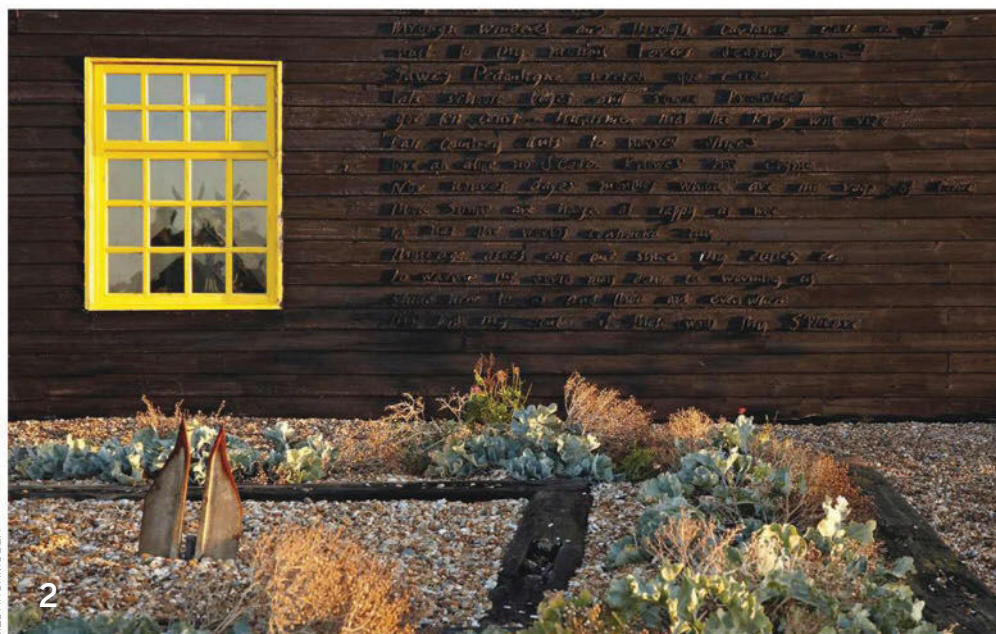


Sarah Price is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 Olympic Park.

True colours

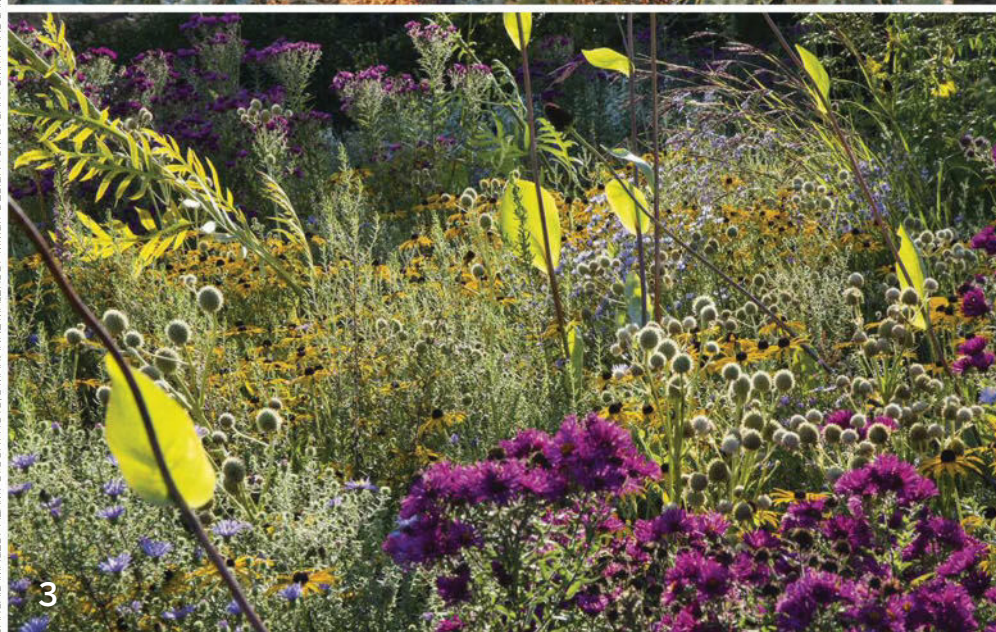
Colour is key to any garden design, but it may be time to look beyond nature to the worlds of art and interior design for new and bold combinations

WORDS SARAH PRICE



2 Sunshine strip

A single high note of colour against a neutral background will pick out an architectural feature. At the former home of the late artist and film director Derek Jarman in Dungeness, brilliant yellow windows stand out against the tarred timber clapboards of the cottage. Look closer and you'll see hidden detail: John Donne's poem *The Sun Rising* is written on the blackened wall in raised text.



3 Opposing colour

In this design by Tom Stuart-Smith and James Hitchmough colour is sustained through successive layers of emerging interest. A long-flowering 'middle layer' is made up of two complementary hues with the cerise-pink of *Symphiotrichum novae-angliae* 'Septemberrubin' and the yellow-orange of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*. When complementary colours are placed next to each other they make the other appear more vivid, a phenomenon known as 'simultaneous contrast'. The near-leafless stems of the tall, emergent, *Rudbeckia maxima* allows light to filter down through the layers, further intensifying the brilliance of flower and foliage.

It shouldn't be a surprise that colour is among the most immediate of senses; our past lives as hunter gatherers conditioned us to look out for bright berries to help keep us from going hungry. Yet despite its pre-eminence in our perceptions of our surroundings, the garden-design profession finds it very hard to think about colour in new and interesting ways, and often feels stuck in a rut. Vita Sackville-West's 'white garden' at Sissinghurst or the 'hot border' at Hidcote were interesting ideas in their time but have been so widely replicated that they have descended into cliché. As designers, our approach to colour must go beyond the colour wheel. In developing my theory of colour I have looked outside of gardening to fine art, architecture, fashion and interior design.

Colourist Pierre Bonnard's paintings [some of which you can currently see for yourself at the Royal Academy's *Painting the*

Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse exhibition] are of simple domestic scenes; a view out of a window, a corner of a kitchen table or a woman in a bath. Each scene appears to be flooded in dazzling, iridescent colour, reminding us of the transformative power of light. In his painting, as in life, colour is changed by colours and light around them. Take a piece of white paper: on its own it looks pure white, but place it next to snow and it appears grey. In bright sunlight white flowers appear bleached out and their delicate details flattened, yet in low twilight they appear luminous. An exterior wall painted in dark taupe can look white in sunlight yet an earthy brown on a dark, misty day.

Interior designers have the freedom to choose any colour they want for a paint, and can colour match to any object, be it fabric, metal or a background detail of a painting. We gardeners ▶

4 Within these walls

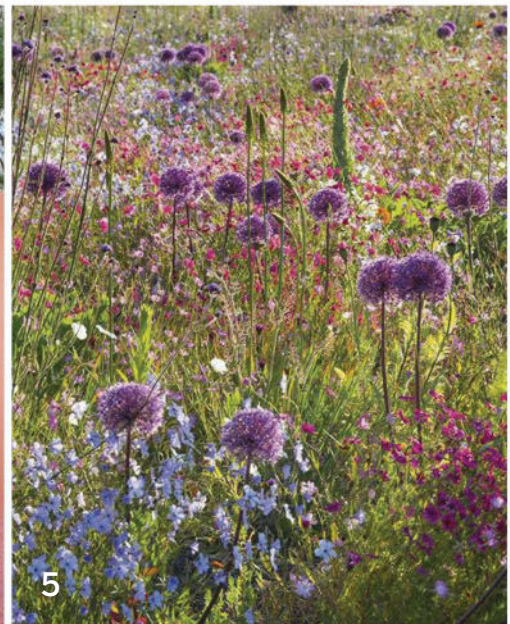
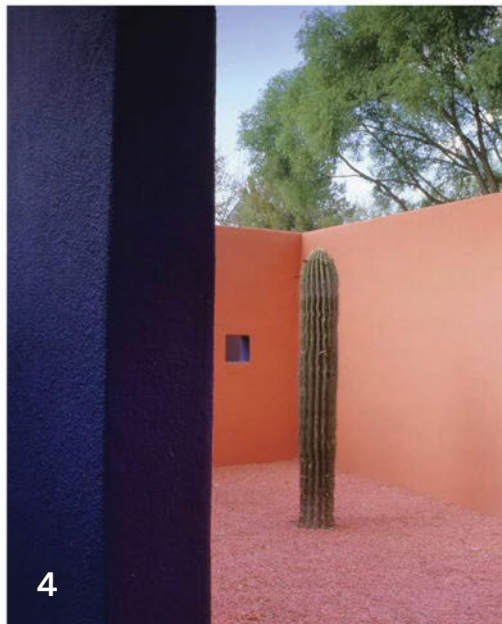
Pioneering landscape architect Martha Schwartz's design in El Paso, Texas, reinterprets a Mexican walled garden, using concrete, bright paint, gravel and cacti to create a low-maintenance space. The brilliant colours – pink, purple and deep yellow – hold their own in the strong Texan light.

5 Rule breaker

The University of Sheffield's Nigel Dunnett and James Hitchmough like to break with convention. Here they mix the purple of *Allium* 'Globemaster' with *Viscaria oculata* in both 'warm' pink and 'cool' azure blue. Repeating species across a large area makes this unlikely colour combination even more electric.

6 Centre stage

Swiss architect Peter Zumthor's 2011 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, in London's Kensington Gardens, created the perfect setting for Piet Oudolf's plantings to shine. The black structure emphasised the punctuations of colour – the deep reds of *Astrantia major* 'Claret' and *Monarda* 'Jacob Cline' and violet blue *Aconitum* – while the pale forms of *Eupatorium*, *Actaea* and *Molinia* appeared almost to glow.



▷ are constrained by living organisms that are constantly changing through the seasons. One simple solution is to contrast a monotone backdrop with high notes of intense colour. A small courtyard garden, for example, may contain few plants and be featureless save for perhaps the dark green of ivy on a wall and a garden door painted in a startling pink.

In classical Italian gardens the dark greens of cypress and *Quercus ilex* form a homogeneous counterpoint to a brilliant blue sky; shaded, tree-lined avenues cast deep, geometric shadows in the strong sunlight and splashes of intense colour are occasional events. In Britain, where the sunlight is softer, a similar approach can work, with dark yew hedges highlighting the lime-green of fresh, spring growth. A singular dash of vermilion from an oriental poppy in bloom (and perhaps a

few wispy stands of white cow parsley) would make this palette of greens sing. Provided you have a strong, monotone framework you can then overlay spots and patches of colour with confidence and have fun.

Although usually seen as an constraint, nature can also challenge our ideas, providing us with daring colour schemes that on paper would not seem likely to work. Plum, white and yellow sound an unlikely combination, yet these are the colours that make up my beloved fritillaria meadow, spangled with creeping buttercup. The verdant grass acts as a unifying matrix breaking up the otherwise jarring colours into an intricate, pointillist-like composition. Similarly, at Hergest Croft in the Welsh Marches, carmine-red, pink and yellow tulips, pale-blue camassias and dandelions and their 'clocks'

4. JERRY HARPER / GAPPHOTOS; 5. MARIANNE MAJERUS / MWG; 6. DES GINN, NIGEL DUNNETT AND JAMES HITCHMOUGH; 6. WALTER HERST



STEVE LIVERMAN / FLICKR © BARRAGAN FOUNDATION / 2016, DACS

7 Scale

The late Mexican architect, Luis Barragán was inspired by the colours and walled refuge of traditional Mexican buildings. His austere structures were painted in sensuous colours: shades of red, pink and purple; orange, yellow, and occasionally blue. Here at Cuadra San Cristóbal, Mexico City, you can appreciate the monumental scale of his colour planes.

Further reading

Gertrude Jekyll's influential *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* (Frances Lincoln, 2001) is as relevant today as it was when first published in 1908. In it she details the subtle use of warm and cool colours in her planting designs, which she described as beautiful 'living pictures'.

Artist David Batchelor, whose installations explore the experience of colour in the city, looks at Western culture's fear of corruption through colour in *Chromophobia (FOCI)* (Reaktion Books, 2000). Find out more about his theories on colour from a contemporary perspective by searching on YouTube for 'TateShots: David Batchelor – Studio Visit'.

make for an enchanting spring scene; an unlikely cacophony of colour held together by a green, grassy sward.

The New Perennial Movement has exploited these lessons; matrices of ornamental grasses provide a slowly changing, tonal and textural sea through which to thread perennials and bulbs. We talk about how the perennials are selected for their form and structural qualities yet it is often the colour harmonies that ultimately seduce us. Designer Piet Oudolf's sumptuous palettes of moody purples have travelled and been celebrated across the globe. In the Lurie Garden in the Millennium Park, Chicago, he has created seas of salvia, mixing several species, including *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Mainacht', *S. nemorosa* 'Wesuwe' and *S. x sylvestris* 'Rügen', so that their flowering times overlap to provide an intense colour hit. The

artistry of this approach relies on careful observation of the shifting colour harmonies of nature through the seasons; the cool whites, fresh yellows and greens of spring, the warm purple and russet tones of moorland in late summer and the butter yellows and pale whites of a birch grove in early winter.

Unlike photographers who can choose to work in black and white, gardeners cannot opt out of working with colour. We've never lived in a world where there are more colours to see – illuminated advertisements, packaging, high-definition TV and LCD screens. Yet as gardeners we see colour at its very best, made more precious because it is fleeting and always different depending on natural light. Tuning into colour and thinking carefully about the work that colour performs in your designs can draw on another level of artistic expression. □



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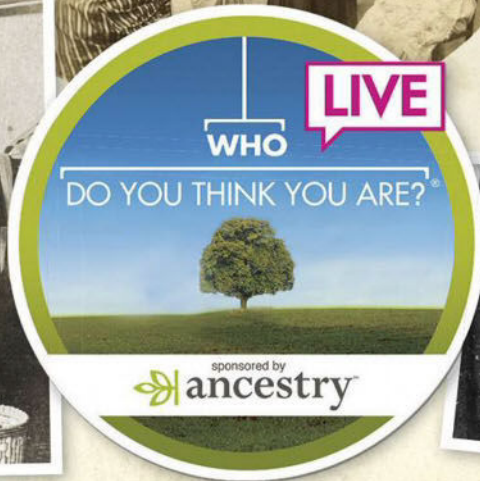
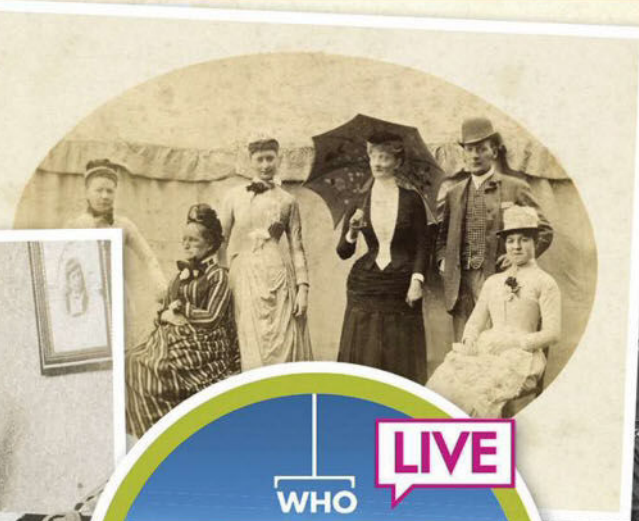
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Jacksons Fencing
News, topical treats
and more...

How to create a stylish hideaway in your garden

Early spring is the perfect time to start planning a garden makeover. It's exciting thinking about what changes you can make to your outside space. Something to keep in mind is making sure you move fast, so you can complete your project in plenty of time to fully enjoy the summer.

One of the things that can make a huge difference to the time you spend in the garden is to create a structure or shelter. This not only adds an interesting visual element, but obviously has a use as a handy outdoor room.

TV programmes like George Clarke's 'Amazing Spaces' and 'Shed of the Year' have broadened our minds to the potential of existing structures like chalets, caravans, sheds and even shepherd huts, that can be 'up-cycled' to make a quirky haven in the garden, where we can relax, entertain friends and family, or spend time on our own hobbies and pastimes.

However, not everyone has the time, money or imagination to conceive of renovating a shed that's already in situ, or making something from scratch. Perhaps this is where the smart choice is investing in a ready-made structure like the Retreat or the fantastic new Curve from Jacksons Fencing.

The Curve is a sleek and simple structure - one continuous curve arching gracefully from the ground. There's no need for posts, with this seemingly gravity-defying contemporary garden shelter. It's fastened securely to the ground with three strong steel blades that are dug in on each side.

The generous interior space is big enough to set up a dining area, leaving ample room for a chill out zone. This is enhanced by the

unusual effects produced by sunlight shining through the horizontal slats, which creates a calming setting for relaxing in. The clear polycarbonate sheets covering the panels, lend the Curve a shower-proof quality, and this also adds some protection from the wind.

If you are looking for something a little smaller the Retreat is available in two styles; one with the original Venetian-style infill panels, the same as Jacksons very popular panels of the same name and the other version has the new woven infill panels, which gives it a very different look (shown below).

As with all their products, Jacksons garden shelters are hand made in Kent from Jakcured timber guaranteed for 25 years, so you can enjoy them for many years to come. Find out more by going to your dedicated page:

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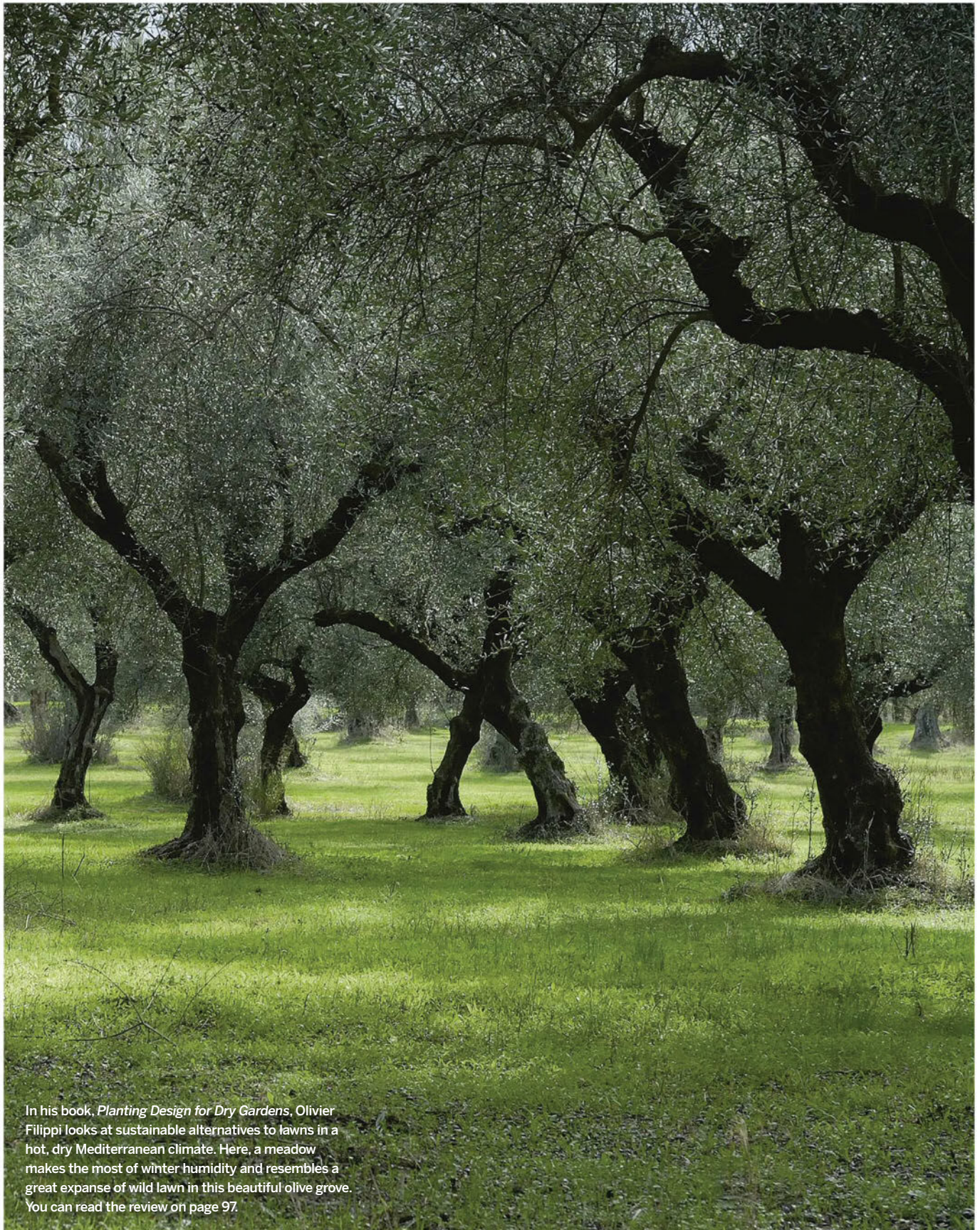
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In his book, *Planting Design for Dry Gardens*, Olivier Filippi looks at sustainable alternatives to lawns in a hot, dry Mediterranean climate. Here, a meadow makes the most of winter humidity and resembles a great expanse of wild lawn in this beautiful olive grove. You can read the review on page 97.

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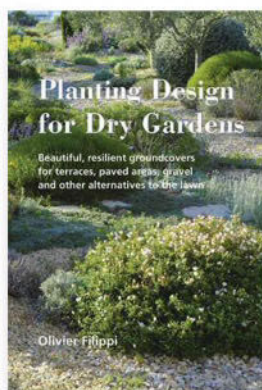


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Book reviews



PLANTING DESIGN FOR DRY GARDENS

by Olivier Filippi

Filbert Press, £35
ISBN 978-0993389207

Filled with alternative ways of looking at the design of green spaces in a hot, dry Mediterranean climate.

Reviewer John Hoyland is a writer and plantsman.

For the past 30 years French nurseryman Olivier Filippi and his wife Clara have been growing and researching plants that are adapted to the poor soil and the hot, dry summers of their Mediterranean home. More recently, they have been studying landscapes and ecological systems with similar climates.

This book is a result of their search to find alternatives to lawns in areas with a Mediterranean climate. The lush green sward of cool, damp northern Europe is only achievable in these areas at huge environmental cost, and, as Filippi points out, in parts of southern California 60 per cent of water consumption is used to irrigate lawns. He proposes flowering meadows, gravel gardens, green carpets (plants you can walk on) and flowering terraces as sustainable alternatives. All are inspired by Mediterranean landscapes. None rely on artificial irrigation, pesticides or herbicides to look

healthy and beautiful. The book is broadly divided into four sections: an argument for new ways of looking at green spaces in gardens and public spaces; the alternative ways of approaching ground cover; the practicalities of creating and maintaining a ground-cover garden; and a directory of suitable plants.

Well-researched and scholarly, this book is also packed with practical horticultural advice that is rooted on Filippi's extensive experience of making gardens and studying landscapes. It would be an invaluable resource for anyone struggling to create green spaces in hot, dry climates.

The title is slightly misleading for a book about ground-cover planting for gardens and open spaces in a Mediterranean climate. Its original title translates literally as 'alternatives to lawn' – while it might not be catchy enough to leap out from bookshop shelves, it is a more apt description of the contents.

Book offer

RRP £35. Reader offer price **£31.50** including p&p*.



LANDSCAPE AND GARDEN DESIGN SKETCHBOOKS

by Tim Richardson

Thames & Hudson, £29.95
ISBN 978-0500518045

A behind-the-scenes look at the personal sketchbooks of 37 top international landscape designers.

Reviewer Camilla Phelps is a writer and city gardener.

This is a fascinating collection of hand-drawn sketches from the studios of the world's top contemporary landscape designers. Instead of beautiful shots of finished gardens, Richardson uses the drawings and accompanying interviews to give a rare and intimate glimpse of the design process through the eyes of the designers.

Through the sketches we gain an insight into the early stages and inspiration behind some key projects. But this book is not just about the visuals. In the interviews Richardson teases out the essence of each designer's approach to drawing, capturing their thoughts about the relationship between designer and pen. From Isabel and Julian Bannerman's refreshing championing of the 'back of a fag packet method' to Claude Cormier's description of a sketch as the 'soul' of a project, there are some entertaining viewpoints.

There is much debate about hand-drawing versus computers

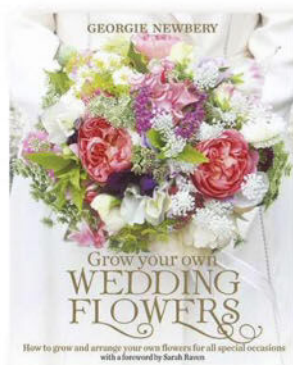
and, in a world where CAD (computer-aided design) is the norm, the book is a celebration of pen on paper. From simple geometric line drawings by Estúdio OCA and a gorgeous concept study in crayon and watercolours by Monika Gora, to Raymond Jungles' elaborate hand-drawn plans, Piet Oudolf's unique planting blueprints and some lovely Cleve West sketches, many approaches are revealed. You glean a real sense of how the designers experiment with, develop and finalise their ideas and how sometimes Photoshop and SketchUp play a part.

This would have been a wonderful textbook to have had when I was studying garden design. And while it is a must-have for every design student, it is also a good read and a joyful visual feast for design lovers. In a year when we are celebrating the heritage of 'Capability' Brown, it feels important to have such a fantastic record of how garden designers work today.

Book offer

RRP £29.95. Reader offer price **£26.95** including p&p*.

Book reviews



GROW YOUR OWN WEDDING FLOWERS

by Georgie Newbery

Green Books, £24.95
ISBN 978-0857842534

A useful book full of practical tips, but which never loses sight of the magic of the task in hand.

Reviewer Lia Leendertz is a garden writer and allotmenteer.

I have two experiences of home-grown wedding flowers: a friend grew and arranged my wedding flowers to magical effect; and I later attempted to do the same for another friend, with less fabulous results and plenty of panicked last-minute flower buying. I can vouch for how special home-grown wedding flowers can be when you get them right – and how tricky it is to do so.

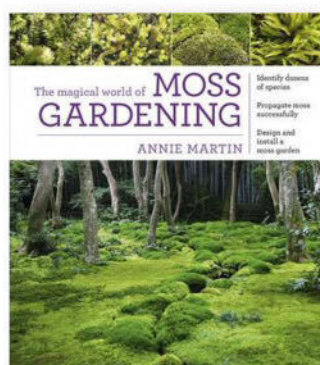
Georgie Newbery is the owner of Common Farm Flowers in Somerset, where she grows and arranges flowers for mail order and around 50 weddings a year, so she knows a thing or two. In her new book she rolls up her sleeves and steps purposefully into the breach between the fantasy and the reality of growing wedding flowers. She piles straight into the practicalities, giving a true picture of the scale of the task but then immediately breaking it down so that it feels possible and manageable. I particularly

liked the 'stem count', where she cleverly shows you how to work backwards from the amount of arrangements you will need to make, to work out exactly how many flowers you are going to need for your particular wedding. Reassuring stuff.

Helpfully, the bulk of the book is given over to chapters on weddings at particular times of year – an early summer wedding, a winter wedding and so on – so you can concentrate on tasks that apply to the wedding you are growing for. For each season Newbery tells us the best plants, when to sow and how to grow, and what to pick from the garden and hedgerow. Then follows several glorious real-life case studies, and a set of comprehensive instructions for all the different arrangements you would be expected to make for the big day. This excellent book is packed with practicality and inspiration for this most meaningful of horticultural challenges.

Book offer

RRP £24.95. Reader offer price **£21.95** including p&p*.



THE MAGICAL WORLD OF MOSS GARDENING

by Annie Martin

Timber Press, £15
ISBN 978-1604695601

A detailed look at the beauty and versatility of moss with considered advice on how to grow and use it in the garden.

Reviewer Noël Kingsbury is a writer and plantsman.

To say 'it's more moss than grass' is an almost standard gardening expression about a poor quality lawn. This book takes off with that idea, suggesting we forget the grass and celebrate the beauty, utility and versatility of mosses. Japanese gardens make creative use of moss, and so, it would appear, do an increasing number of those in North America. Get up close, and it is easy to appreciate how beautiful mosses are; they seem to dominate certain habitats, and there are lots of different species – 760-odd in the British Isles alone.

The book, written by an enthusiastic grower from North Carolina known as 'Mossin' Annie', starts off (perhaps with an eye to convincing the sceptic) with a tour of gardens that creatively use moss. She moves on to the natural history of mosses, explaining how they are different to other, more advanced, plants, then discusses in some detail 25 recommended

species (many of which might be American although most genera are common to North America and Europe) and moves on to advise on designing with mosses and giving detailed advice on how to grow them.

Comprehensive, inspirational, and full of information, this is a fascinating book for anyone wanting to truly broaden the range of plants they grow. The author's home region is a very moss-friendly one, but I was left feeling a bit unsure about how those of us in other places might choose a good location for growing them. The plants appear to flourish (and crucially non-mosses do not thrive) once certain low thresholds of light, moisture and nutrients are reached, however, I did not feel I got the guidance I wanted here. Nevertheless a very useful guide, and key perhaps to bringing life to some of the garden habitats conventionally seen as particularly challenging.

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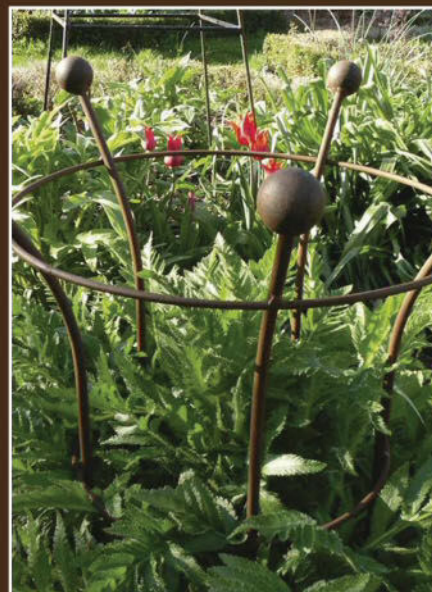
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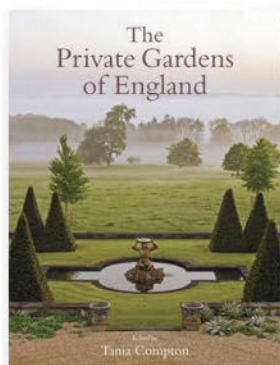
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Book reviews



THE PRIVATE GARDENS OF ENGLAND

by Tania Compton

Constable, £75
ISBN 978-1472121011

Enjoy more than a month's worth of upmarket garden open days without having to move from your armchair.

Reviewer Jodie Jones is a garden writer.

Why do we like looking at other people's gardens? Of course we go to be impressed, to be inspired, and to eat home-made cakes, but above all, I suspect, what we most enjoy is the simple pleasure of peeking into otherwise hidden lives.

In this book, Tania Compton presents an armchair tour of 35 gardens that rarely, if ever, open to the public, described by the men and women who care for them. Compton is a respected designer, writer and trustee of the Garden Museum, who moves in elevated horticultural circles and appears to have rifled through her personal address book to make this selection.

Gardeners with ancestral homes account for a fair portion of this book, as do the big-name designers who divide their time between Chelsea and the homes of the international jet set. But you will also find fashion designer Jasper Conran's Somerset estate, the garden that theatrical impresario Cameron

Mackintosh shares with his partner Michael Le Poer Trench, and Wyken Hall in Suffolk, where Carla Carlisle's Mississippi roots are manifest in a row of Adirondack chairs that say 'come over here, take a load off'.

In every possible way this is a book that sets out to be exclusive, and it is doubtless destined to grace many an expensive coffee table but, refreshingly, it is also well worth reading. It is an opportunity to eavesdrop on the grander side of the horticultural world. If nothing else, hearing Lady Caroline Egremont bemoan the impossibility of digging up 1,000 'superior' but charmless Dutch crocus she planted as a naïve newcomer to Petworth House, will put your own horticultural mishaps into perspective. Not every one of the 35 contributors writes well, but their individual voices ring out clearly, making this series of essays a genuinely illuminating exploration of gardens and gardeners.

Book offer

RRP £75. Reader offer price **£67.50** including p&p*.

Other books

Useful tips and tricks to ensure you get the most from your garden, plus stylish ideas to improve your garden design



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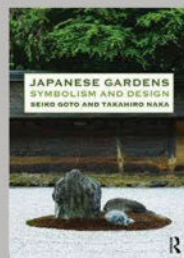


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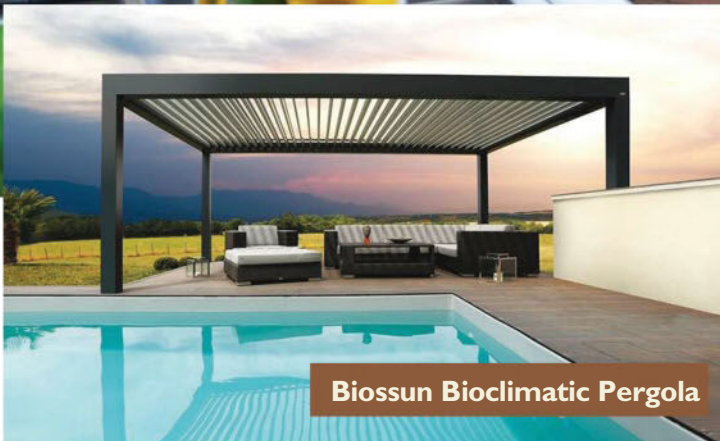
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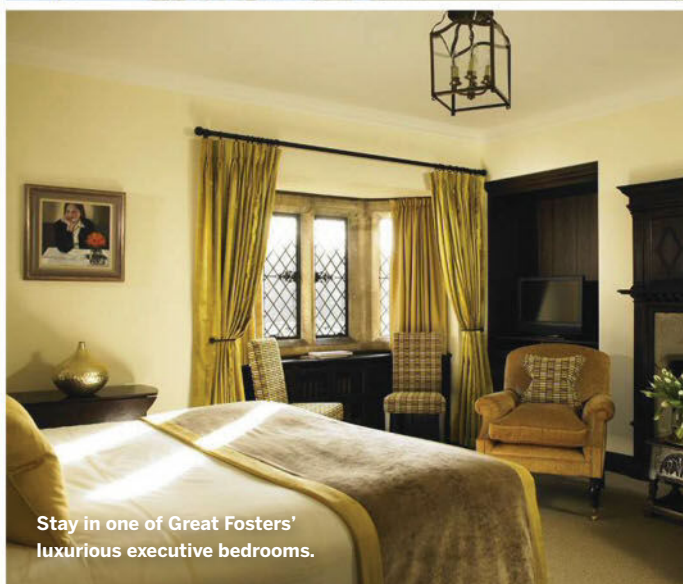
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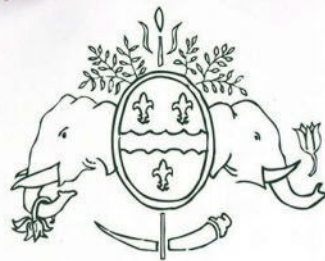
champagne will be waiting followed by dinner in The Grill. On your second morning, after a full English breakfast, enjoy a stroll around the gardens and grounds before departing for home.

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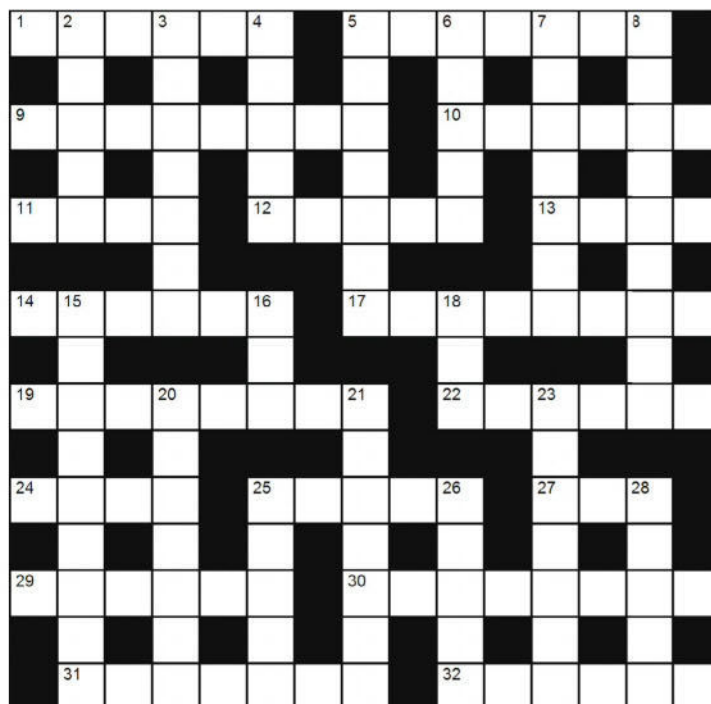
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Crossword



ACROSS

1 Disease that makes plants wither... and top of bulb glow! (6)

5 The French adapted geums as peas and beans etc (7)

9 A classic red/white radish – it's a diamond! (8)

10 Genus of goat's rue – in Donegal eg Ardara (6)

11 Name of a compact, yellow Helianthus – 'Princess Royal' (4)

12 Succulent plants – a sloe variety (5)

13 Cook rarely includes the mallow 'gumbo' (4)

14 Talk to this award-winning British plantswoman! (6)

17 19th-century English plant hunter, when soil shifted (1,1,6)

19 Thorny bushes revealed by botanist, initially, on leisurely walks (8)

22 Sea-pink's economical management (6)

24 Leaf rib of some foxglove, infected (4)

25 Planthunter, Joseph's river enclosures (5)

27 It's a plant's vital juices, fool! (3)

29 It's useful for carrying a mound of soil (6)

30 Prepares to blanch celery? Soil's exhausted (6,2)

31 Perennial with bottle-brush flowers – one in trials, maybe (7)

32 Hybrid rhododendron group

from a sheepish nursery-rhyme character! (2-4)

DOWN

2 Leguminous spiky-flowered plant (5)

3 Great Dixter's head gardener, Fergus's attic room at end of allotment (7)

4 A tree genus in Haiti liana (5)

5 Genus of plant also called 'lily turf' produces ripe oil (7)

6 Estimates the size of, we hear, plum-like fruits (5)

7 Common name for achillea's messy oil film (7)

8 A loose-leaf chicory shaped like Rio's famous mountain (5,4)

15 'Living fossil' weed disturbing earth soil (9)

16 Essential product of eg eucalyptus (3)

18 Conditions liked by eg diascia in Inverewe today (3)

20 Genus of herb also called bee balm – a random mixture (7)

21 Overcast, except when after start of summer (7)

23 An eglantine's fruit – pink and trendy (7)

25 Shady place in the garden – in gazebo we renovated (5)

26 Perhaps the genista bush moved around end of year (5)

28 Trim a dried fruit (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

FEBRUARY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS: 7 Whorl 8 Columbine 9 Tub 10 Bloomer 11 Eve 12 Lithops 14 Thapsia 16 Fertilisation 20 Festuca 22 Strikes 23 Elm 25 Tellima 26 Rue 27 Tanacetum 28 Oasis.

DOWN: 1 Lobb 2 Club root 3 Clematis 4 Umbria 5 Mite 6 Hedera 7 Wattle 8 Crops 13 Trees 15 Stock 17 Leaflets 18 Tarragon 19 Asters 20 Fiesta 21 Urtica 22 Stigma 24 Mine 26 Rose.



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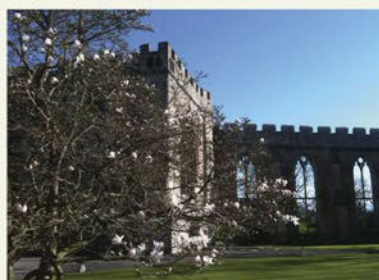


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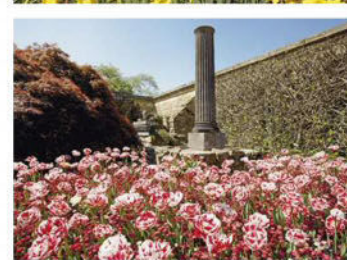
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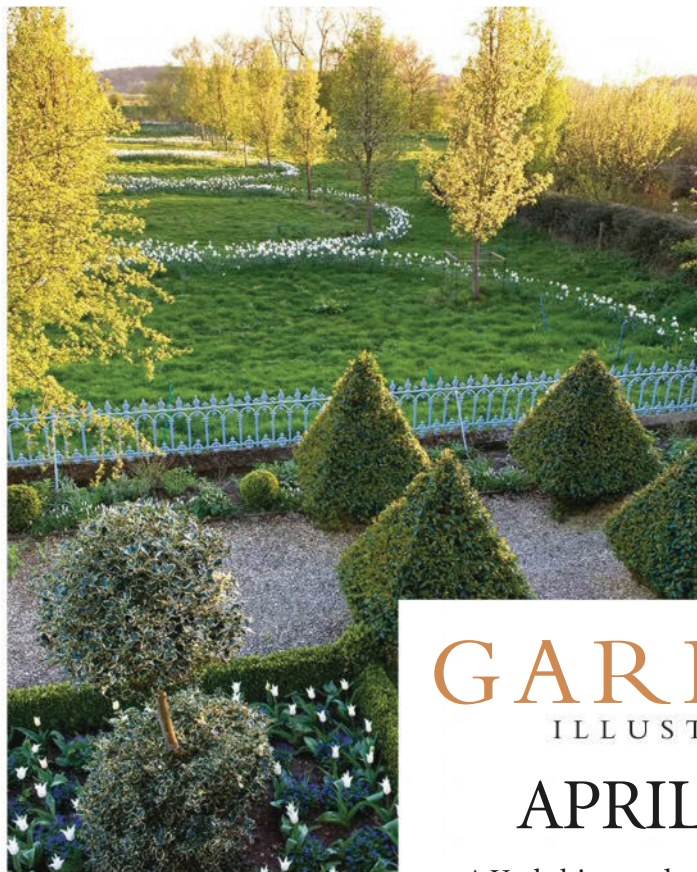
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Unlonesome pines

Frank sets off to visit Wyoming and meets some marvellous conifers en route

WORDS FRANK RONAN ILLUSTRATION CELIA HART

It is hard for us to think of conifer forests as a natural thing. Scots pine, juniper and yew, the only natives, if they ever were forests, are only punctuations in the landscape now, and in the tamed landscape at that. We have forests of Sitka spruce, but they grow evenly sized and spaced in straight rows and could never be mistaken for natural. The conifer to us has been reduced to a garden adornment and rarely allowed to flourish even there.

Along the California coast you see a remarkable conifer that contorts against the wind into extraordinary shapes. At first I had to ask what it was and be shocked at my own stupidity in not knowing a Monterey cypress. Familiar to us as the darkening windbreak for every exposed country house, and notorious as a parent of the Leyland cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa* would have tempted any seed collector in its native state. Who could suspect that it would become so dull in exile?

I made a road trip the other day, wanting to see Wyoming, and it turned out to be something of a coniferous circle. In a hurry to get to my end point, I began early enough to get through the horrors of Highway 5 in the dark, which brought me nicely to Lake Tahoe in the morning, to crisp mountain air and pine trees, dominated by *Pinus jeffreyi*. Stopping only long enough to Google what tree I was looking at, I pushed on, skimming through arboreally unremarkable parts of Nevada and Utah and round the Salt Lake and into Wyoming, with just enough daylight remaining to see that the landscape there was worth the thousand miles or more already spent.

Perhaps I really started looking for trees in Big Piney, which was small and pineless, but after Jackson Hole the forests began in earnest, up through Grand Teton and into Yellowstone, which was the real objective and the reason for the hurry to get there. It was autumn and the roads through the park were about to be closed for



Forest fires and regeneration; not a disaster at all but the natural way for Pinus contorta to carry on

the winter. Because I was there to see the landscape, the trees, at first, were frustrating. Mile after mile of narrow coniferous avenue with only glimpses of the views promised by the map.

But then there were sudden expanses of dead lodgepole: mountainsides thickly covered in grey skeletons, making you wonder what the apocalypse was. Then you noticed that they stood in a green blanket of saplings. The result of great forest fires and regeneration it transpired; not a disaster at all but the natural way for *Pinus*

contorta to carry on, despite what Smokey Bear said. Out the other side of Yellowstone and back into Wyoming trees were forgotten as spectacular mountains give way to the sort of cowboy landscape I'd dreamed of seeing since the first reading of *My Friend Flicka*.

And then the mesmeric whole of Montana, townless and treeless (but such beautiful horses) until somewhere round Missoula, the great surprise of Lolo National Forest. Not just because it was there, but because it was autumn and the larches had turned a buttery yellow that ran in stripes and dots and chevrons and skews through the dark green of the other conifers; astonishing to see once; amazing to see all across the mountains for a run of nearly two hundred miles.

Washington I had thought would be all trees, but there were none in the east, or down the Columbia River to Portland, and not until the Oregon coast where Sitka spruce could be rescued from prejudice at last, growing rough with hemlock right down to the sea. Finally, right as you cross the border back into California, there is a long avenue of redwoods to welcome you, which becomes a winding road through infinite redwood forest, so haughty of the ground that you need headlights at midday, until damp slowly gives way to dry and somewhere before Monterey the first Monterey cypress tells you that this is home territory. □



Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

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